Shepherds

JANUARY, 1956

WORLD WIDE CHURCH ATTENDANCE MOVEMENT

January to Easter, 1956

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Noted Australian Evangelist To Tour United States

The General Board of Evangelism announces the visit to the United States by the Rev. Alan Walker, Director of Australia's very successful "Mission to the Nation" for The Methodist Church. Mr. Walker was just recently awarded the "Order of the British Empire" by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, in recognition of his outstanding spiritual leadership.

Mr. Walker will work through the Board of Evangelism for one year, beginning early in 1956. He will be the speaker for the Hour of Evangelism at General Conference, April 30 to May 4, and is available for a series of eight-day evangelistic missions during the months of August, 1956, through January, 1957.

Districts or cities interested in securing Mr. Walker for such a meeting should apply at once to:

Dr. Harry L. Williams
Mission to America
1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

Personal speaking engagements are being handled by

Dr. Joseph H. Edge
General Board of Evangelism
1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

SHEPHERDS

For Commission on Membership and Evangelism in the Local Church

January, 1956

Vol. 10—No. 4

Geo. H. Jones, *Editor*
Gordon Pratt Baker, *Editorial Associate*
Edward Ferguson, Jr., *Editorial Assistant*

TIDINGS, 1908 Grand Avenue
Nashville 5, Tennessee

Methodist Pastors and District Superintendents receive SHEPHERDS—all 10 issues each year—free of charge.

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Beautiful 11-color canvas lawn sign.

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_____ **Large Newspaper Mat** **50¢ each** _____
A 2-column mat, 7 inches deep, bearing a Christmas message urging that "Christmas Is for Christ."

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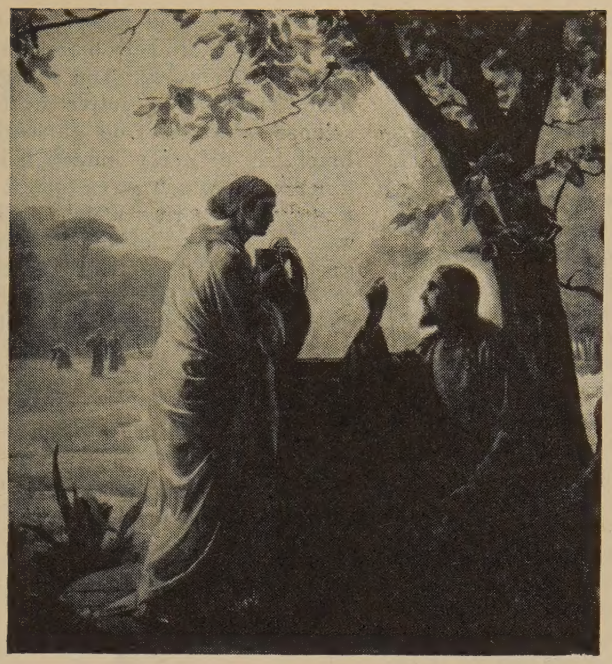

Evangelism and the Grace of God

by Lynn Harold Hough

Former Dean, Drew Theological Seminary

EVANGELISM is the extending of the divine invitation to men. The evangelist announces God's good will to men. He invites men to have a place in the Father's house. He finds his commission in such words as those in the last chapter of the book of Revelation: "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come, and let him who desires take the water of life without price." Indeed, the evangelist is a kind of incarnation of the word "Come."

God has entrusted the task of evangelism to human servants of his. So it becomes easy for us to think of evangelism as something which we do for God. This is not the whole truth. Indeed, we need to realize that it is only a part of the truth. Evangelism is something which we do with the aid of God. It is something we do in cooperation with God. It is something which we do in constant dependence upon the grace of God. So a whole world of meaning is opened up before us when we consider evangelism and the grace of God.

We ask ourselves then the far-reaching question: "What is the contribution made by the grace of God to the work of evangelism?"

I

It is the grace of God which has provided the message of the evangelist. It has provided the revelation without which there would be no gospel to preach. The revelation

Illustration above, Christ and the Samaritan Woman, by Carl Bloch. Courtesy, Camera Clix.

consists of words and deeds and of their interpretation. The words of the prophets cause us to see God as righteousness alive and love alive. The deeds involved in the Old Testament adventure with God reveal the very nature of man in his promise and his waywardness, and the very nature of God in his government of righteous good will. The words of Jesus bring to us a wealth of understanding about life and about God. The deeds of Jesus reveal God in action through his Son for the salvation of men. All this is made real in a great interpretation which comes to a certain completion in the writings of Paul. It all comes to a consummation in the Cross as a deed of suffering love and in the resurrection as a deed of divine triumph. It is as these things capture the mind and dominate the conscience and control the will that Christianity becomes an actual fact in human life. And all of this —the words and the deeds and the interpretation and the appropriation—expresses the divine grace which is working through them all. The prophets spoke with human voices made effective by the divine grace. Jesus is the divine grace in speech and in action. Nobody is more sure than Paul that what he sets forth he has received through the divine grace. The gospel and its interpretation are gifts of the divine grace to me.

It cannot be said too strongly that the more deeply the man who is to be trusted with the tasks of evangelism has studied the divine revelation the more true and effective will be his work. If the truths of the gospel dwell hazily in the mind of the evangelist, he will never rise fully to the height of his mission. And the very genius of the Bible, that great gift of the grace of God to men, must master his whole life. Something has come to life in the Bible without which the evangelist has no message and no commission. His brooding meditation upon the great writings of the Old Testament and the New is a part of his equipment for speaking the good words of God in Christ. His dwelling upon the truths expressed in the Old Testament and the New until they become bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh will make his word come with authenticity and clarity and with power. T. S. Eliot once wrote of "empty men." There are few things more tragic than an empty evangelist. The revelation which is the gift of the grace of God must become part of his very life.

II

The grace of God has been at work in the man the evangelist would win long before the evangelist speaks to him. God has had immediate access to the inner life of every man who has ever lived in the world. And his grace has been immediately active in that conscience which is God at work in the inner life of every human being. This inner voice which gives men a sense of a moral authority which ought to be obeyed is a part of the preparation of every man for the voice of the evangelist. For the gospel of Christ is the fulfillment of the moral voice. The struggle of every man with this moral voice which he may obey and which he may betray is mediated by the grace of God at work in his life. Insofar as he obeys the moral voice there is a hunger for completion which can come only in Christ. Insofar as he has betrayed the moral voice there is a need of forgiveness which only Christ can give. And both of these needs are satisfied after the acceptance of the invitation which the evangelist gives. There is a perpetual tension in the inner life of every man until he finds the peace which Christ alone can give.

This tension is illustrated in the wild moral confusion of much contemporary literature, in poetry, in fiction, and in the drama. The portraiture of wasteland in contemporary literature suggests to the man of Christian discernment a desert which may be irrigated and made fertile. It is the gospel of Christ which causes the desert to blossom as a rose. The grace of God is always at work in all the confusion and despair of the inner life of men through their very loneliness and unrest and hard disillusionment preparing them for the great invitation of Christ. If there were no sense of need the Gospel would speak to irresponsive ears.

The vast and bitter confusion of a world which in so great a degree has turned from God raises questions as to the cause and the cure of this great disease of modern life, indeed of this great disease of human life. The Christian revelation gives both the diagnosis and the cure. And through all the process of thought and struggle the grace of God is working in his world to prepare for the understanding of the disease and the acceptance of the remedy.

We see, then, that no man in the world is godless. For God is working in men everywhere to prepare them for the hearing of the message of the great evangel. Missionaries in all parts of the world have found that something in the hearts of those to whom they spoke said "Yes" to the message of the love of God in Christ. The sense that God is already working in the hearts of those to whom he preaches preparing them to hear the word he speaks for God is of the profoundest importance to the preacher. God has already reached the minds of his congregation before he speaks. God is his perpetual ally in the souls of men.

III

The grace of God gives to men the experience which makes them evangelists. For something has happened to the evangelist. He has met God in Christ as he speaks from the Cross. He has cast his past, his present, and his future into those powerful arms which were stretched upon the Cross. In a mighty act of trust he has accepted what God has done for him as the supreme matter in his life. He will not try to earn salvation. He accepts it as the gracious gift of God. In this fashion Saul surrendered to the Christ whom he met

A Prayer

by Ben J. Bradley

Franklin, Kentucky

I thank Thee, Father whom I cannot see,
That Thou hast given life's full cup to me.
I pray that I may drink it, nor complain,
If aught of bitterness it may contain.

If it be sweet Thy love hath made it so;
I ask for grace to share it as I go.
If bitter be its dregs, bear Thou me up,
That still my heart may thank Thee for the cup.

I need not ask for blessings at Thy hand,
For Thou hast promised more than my demand.
I can only ask that Thou wilt light my way
And guide me in Thy paths from day to day.

Forgive me when I read Thy will amiss;
Make strong my weakness with Thy tenderness;
And grant the faith, to this Thy child of dust,
To say, "I will," when Thou hast said, "Thou must."

on the road to Damascus. In this fashion Augustine found the solution of all the problems of his struggling and tortured life. In this fashion Francis the simple-minded youth of Assisi found a wholly satisfactory center for his devotion. In this fashion Luther found a direct and transforming relation to God as he met him in Christ. In this fashion John Wesley found his heart strangely warmed. And so untold millions of eager men and women have found new hope, new life, and new power as they have trusted in the Christ who spoke to them from the Cross.

All these men have received an experience which was made real to them by the grace of God. They had something to tell. They had something to proclaim. They had an invitation to give. What they had experienced they offered to other men. What they knew they declared. They had received through the grace of God that which gave complete authenticity to their words and work as they proclaimed the good news in Christ.

Doubtless men have entered the Christian life in various ways. The surrendered will and the obedient life are the important matters. If Christ is the Lord of a man's life that man truly belongs to Christ. But with all the varieties of Christian experience, there is one classical form of that experience. The man who has met the suffering love of God at the Cross and has there accepted what Christ has done for him as a perfect substitute for all he would like to do for God to be sure works as if he had never trusted and trusts as if he never worked. But the living trust in Christ is the perpetual center of his life and joy and hope and work. The evangelical is the classical form of Christian experience. And whenever it is present the work of evangelism thrives in marvelous fashion. So the grace of God prepares men to speak the great word for him. The true evangelist always gives men a sense that he possesses something which they would be glad to have, something which they ought to have, something which would make all the difference in the world to them. In his greatest moments of power the evangelist *is* what he offers.

IV

When the message and the man God has been preparing to receive it meet in the word of the evangelist to whom the message has become a living experience, a moment of crisis and strategy has come. The grace of God is the deepest fact in the hour when the great invitation is given. So God working in the inner life of the man who receives the message seals that message and gives it living power. And as the hearer accepts the message it is the grace of God which fills his spirit with assurance and with peace. From the very beginning God has been and is present in the whole process. And so, in a sense, though human means are constantly used, it is all the achievement of the grace of God.

It is when the evangelist is aware of all this and gladly and humbly accepts it that he becomes the greatest and most effective sort of evangelist. So he becomes the living messenger of the voice of God. So he becomes the living servant of the divine grace.

And the man who has heard and received and accepted the message in his turn is called to be an evangelist. Let him who hears say, "Come." And so the great and glorious work continues to go on under the ministry of God's grace right down the years.

***The Good Shepherd,* by V. Von Schoenherr**

—Three Lions

Church Attendance MOVEMENT

Outstanding Objectives

---BY MONTHS

January—Month of Consecration

Every member receive a visit in his home
Every member sign church loyalty cards
Every member attend church services every week
Every member worship God at home every day
Every home have grace at meals and family devotions

February—Month of Cultivation

Compile the name and address of every prospect
Make a friendly visit to every prospect
- manifest genuine interest in them
- invite them to church
- place helpful literature in their hands
- beam publicity to the unchurched

Every member make friendly cultivation contacts

March—Month of Evangelism and Training

Children's and youth's regular training classes for church membership and the Christian life
- These classes will use the regular training materials provided by the denomination through the church and church school
- The Church Attendance booklet does not deal with this important task

Visitation evangelism on every prospect, on every young person and adult out of the Church and out of Christ
- This should be done by Fishermen's Club and best evangelistic visitors
- This should be done by regular, organized "two by two" visitation evangelism methods
- This visitation should be for a verdict and followed up by pastor's spiritual guidance visit

Persons won should be trained and received into the church on Palm Sunday or Easter

April—Month of Continuation and Follow-Up

Continuation of church attendance by members
Assimilation of all new members
Continuation of cultivation of all prospects not yet won
Continuation of visitation evangelism to reach the very last unchurched person
Continuation of worship services that are vital to the spiritual life of all
Continuation of the promotion and publicity concerning the church and its program

THE THRILL OF *Churchgoing*

by

William F. McDermott

THERE'S a real thrill for you in going to church, if you only know how to find it. It's a progressive thrill, too, the delight of worship growing with the years. I am a witness, for I have enjoyed it for more than half a century.

In regular church attendance you can find something akin to the flaming beauty of a sunrise or sunset, the surge of new life in springtime, the glory of autumn trees, the splendor of noontime on a sunny day, the mellowness of gently falling rain, the sweep of sky over a prairie! All tell of the majesty of God.

You enter into worship with the expectancy of exaltation that great music brings, the feeling of reverence that creeps over you when you enter a cathedral, the spirit of wonder about life when you look into the smiling face of a baby. The pleasures that come and go have nothing to compare with it.

Let us look together at some of the shining facets of regular churchgoing.

Remember at the outset that it is an art, not a chore. At the Chicago World's Fair, I saw chunks of what looked like dull glass as big as hen's eggs. To all appearances they were of no great value. Yet they were worth more than a million dollars. They were giant diamonds in the rough, without any brilliancy or glamour at all. Eventually they would be cut, chiseled and polished into glittering gems—the more facets, the greater the brilliancy.

To countless millions of people churchgoing is a sort of dull duty, something with no attraction. Yet latent in that act is the same beauty that the dull-appearing diamonds in the rough possessed. It takes application to find it and bring out its beauty, but rich reward is there for those who go through with the process.

Attend Church Eagerly

One key to satisfying churchgoing is eagerness—the natural, not synthetic, variety. Just as enthusiasm for one's business, his home, his family, his self-improvement, his recreation is vital to success in any field, so zeal for fellowship with God and God's people, dynamized and enriched by constant church attendance, is the open door to spiritual delight.

I have ranged pleasures from circuses to World Series baseball games, from picnics to grand opera, but no other offers the superb satisfaction of a friendly church service. I realize that there are cold, foreboding churches where, as Billy Sunday used to say, "icicles hang from the chandeliers and the ushers take up the collection on skates"—but God isn't found in such frigidity. Where Christ truly is, warm hearts are, too. And where warmhearted Christian people are, there is the most beautiful friendship on earth.

In such an environment you cannot help developing a deep-seated enthusiasm for Christ's Church, Christ's people, and Christ's Kingdom. It is an eagerness which grows on you until you would no more think of staying away from God's house than you would from your own earthly home.

This brings to mind the most devoted married couple I ever knew. In the long ago they had been in love as youngsters of 19 and 22—attentive, thoughtful, and considerate of each other. They set as their goal the continuation of their little acts of affectionate mutual devotion, vowing never to let the bloom of their marriage fade away.

When I interviewed them, they still addressed each other in tender terms. He brought her flowers and other tokens of affection, and she sought to fulfill his every wish. Their daughter told me that romance still flourished in their lives; they were as attentive to each other as young lovers.

"How long have you been married?" I asked them.

"Just 72 years," the two smiled together, "and we're looking forward to our diamond wedding anniversary."

There came drifting into my mind the thought that here was just a hint of the love existing between Christ and his Church.

Christ loves us and redeems us, and we are his invisible Church; and we love him, too, but we must carefully cultivate that love or it will wither and die. Our eagerness for and joy in the regular worship of God in the church of our choice is what keeps us at peak loyalty in Christian nurture and service.

A Helpful New Book

Basic Beliefs of the Christian Faith

by

Herbert W. Hahn

Brief, pointed explanations of Christian doctrines: God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, Prayer, the Bible, the Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins, the Kingdom of God, Immortality. Complete index of supporting scripture texts.

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So, when you go to church, go eagerly and expectantly—and don't fail to go regularly, rain or shine, hot or cold, when on vacation as well as at home. Your reward will compound rapidly.

Go with Charity

Go to church with charity and good will in your heart. Remember the church is made up of imperfect folks just like you and me. Considering that it is the only institution in the world that throws its doors wide open to all, it is little short of a miracle that church people are as good as they are. But they are struggling for the higher levels of morality, good citizenship, and Christian living.

I remember the time a member of a pulpit committee charged with the task of selecting a new pastor told me, "Mac, we have found the perfect man. He's a minister without a fault. He's the one we're going to call."

"For conscience' sake," I protested, "don't call him. You'll all be miserable. He'll be lonely in his perfection, and you imperfect church members will only find your faults glaring by contrast."

I needn't have worried. They called him. He lasted 10 months and nearly wrecked the church.

Again, I think of the time when a man told Dwight L. Moody he wouldn't join the church because it was full of hypocrites. "Come on in, brother," said Moody, "there's always room for one more."

Have charity for church people and their shortcomings, and they will have love for you and overlook your faults. In worship together, you will be fused into a mighty army for the Lord.

Have a heart for the preacher. Don't expect every sermon to be a masterpiece. Remember that the preacher must serve as executive, administrator, organizer, caller, arbitrator, consoler, adviser, civic leader, promoter, and in a dozen other capacities, yet he must find time to prepare at least 100 sermons and addresses a year. Many ministers must deliver far more than that. Every talk is supposed to be fresh, new, informative, and inspiring.

Thousands of clergymen do that bravely, unfalteringly, effectively, and gladly, year after year. Yet the average pastor feels that he must spend at least 20 hours a week on a sermon. How can he do it? By prayer, love, and the appreciative, helpful spirit of his people. If that Gibraltar of support is his, he will come from a sleepless night of watching by the bedside of the dying into his pulpit to preach with an intensity that no one can withstand.

Do not expect the sermon to be a polished effort like that of a professional lecturer who speaks his piece hundreds of times. Forget the rough spots in it, and abandon any critical tendencies you may have. Listen to the sermon with expectancy.

One good, enduring thought about God, a fresh revelation of scriptural meaning, a new concept of Christian service—any one of these will be ample reward. Take it with you, ponder it and live it. You will gain new vision and courage.

Give thought to the unity of the whole worship service. If well planned, it has one theme running throughout, from invocation to benediction. No longer will you find the minister preaching on "Launch Out Into the Deep" and the choir intoning "Pull for the Shore." Music, devotions, and preaching are unified so that one great phase of the Christian faith is stressed.

As you sing, share in the ritual, heed the spoken prayers, and listen to the sermon, you will find a deepening effect in your spirit. You will make an adventure of watching the pattern of worship unfold and thereby gather more from it.

Keep Saturday Night Sacred

Avoid the sin of Saturday night exhaustion. You don't have to carouse to make Saturday night the greatest enemy of Sunday morning. All that is necessary for this unhappy result is to stay up late. No matter how innocent in itself, such a diversion lures you into sleepiness until Sunday is half over. Even if, by alarm clock, you drag yourself out of bed and go to church, the results will be spiritually meager.

Earnest Christians should keep Saturday night free for preparation for God's day. (The Jewish idea of the Sabbath beginning at sundown the evening before is an eminently appropriate and valuable one.) How delightful it is to have a relaxed evening by the fireside, with minds and hearts centered on things of God and with anticipation directed to the joys of the Sunday soon to dawn! What could be better than a night's good rest, a morning begun with reading a passage from scripture, then a prayer of thanksgiving and the rededication of oneself to God? How ready you would be for the supreme happiness and glory of public worship of the Creator who gave you life, hope, and freedom.

—Reprinted by permission from *The Christian Advocate* and by courtesy of William F. McDermott. This article is available in tract form as the January Tract of the Month at $2.00 per 100.

Knox United Church, Russell, Manitoba, Canada

Pioneer Church Attendance Movement in Canada

by W. G. Zwicker
Knox United Church
Russell, Manitoba
Canada

IN the third year of my pastorate here in Russell, the morale of our congregation was good. Our church was renovated, and attendance at our morning service was high, with 55 per cent of our resident members coming. Following the suggestion of SHEPHERDS, during Lent the minister had informed the members of each family that he was praying for them on a particular morning. We became aware of God's blessing with the passing weeks.

Accepting the theory that *people either go ahead or retrogress,* I desired a greater blessing for my people. So I sent for the booklet, *How to Organize and Conduct a Church Attendance Crusade.* When I had finished reading it, my feeling was "Today is salvation come to thy house." For I was convinced that here was a workable plan of evangelism, a blueprint of action, which, if any congregation accepted the challenge and followed it, would assure a vital experience and worthwhile results.

Organization

I then outlined the plan of the Crusade to the session. Next, the official Board voted its support. This meant that the representatives of all organizations approved, and also the treasurer was authorized to pay any expenses arising out of the Crusade. Then the Board appointed a Steering Committee comprised of one steward, one session member, and the minister.

During the promotion I felt a strong sense of God's guidance. We approached busy men to be chairmen of the committees, and each one accepted the trust placed in him and did a splendid job.

We chose the coldest month of the year to begin our Crusade, i.e., February. We followed faithfully the plans and suggestions in the booklet, *How to Organize and Conduct a Church Attendance Crusade,* and found them practical, in fact, invaluable.

The first Sunday of the Crusade was February 6, 1955. We accepted the suggested slogan, "God is our Strength," and felt greatly fortified. We needed God's help because of sub-zero weather, a sprinkling of doubting Thomases, and the great responsibility of our undertaking as we knew we were the first congregation in Canada to follow the plan of a well-organized and publicized Church Attendance Crusade. (We did not tell our people that we were the first, as we didn't want to use any incentive succeeding churches couldn't draw upon.)

Inspiring Sight

Even before the opening date the attendance began to climb. On the first Sunday of the Crusade, it was an inspiring sight for the minister to see our large brick church with its pews filled to capacity and its people sitting on chairs in the aisles. A good comparison is found in the fact that, for years before this, our Anniversary was observed in February, with an outstanding city minister as guest preacher, and no chairs were required. Now, in the fourth year of the regular pastor, there was an overflow crowd. Here was an answer to my question, "How can an ordinary minister in an ordinary church get extraordinary results?"

Fortunately, having secured a chart for the purpose in 1954, on exactly the first Sunday in February and for months afterward, an accurate count was made. The same was done again in 1955, and the increase at the morning service was 27 per cent.

Before the Crusade, we were discouraged at the small attendance at our evening service. I may say that we were amazed at the *increase* at our *evening service* of 93 per cent.

Act of Faith

As Easter approached, I was led to test the results by an act of faith. I said to myself, "I will *not ask* anyone to join the Church." Twenty-two came forward and joined on Easter Sunday, the largest number to join on one Sunday in my ministry.

Another result! A group was bent on opening up sport for adults on Sunday here. Our people rallied to the defense of Sunday as a day of rest and worship and influenced the club members to vote down the motion for Sunday sport.

We have been richly blessed in more ways than space permits us to tell. We feel there was a blueprint, a vision, a willing people, all blended by the Holy Spirit to produce a symphony. The vision was a full Church. We were obedient to the vision, and it was fulfilled. The blueprint was the booklet "How to Organize . . ." so that we were not as those "who box the air." The symphony was the teamwork; the zoning of the congregation; the teams (80 per cent men), going out the Sunday before, visiting one team to 10 families, issuing a friendly invitation; a movie trailer shown in the local theatre; full publicity by the *Russell Banner*; the Fellowship Committee always on the job; and a telegram from the Rev. Hugh MacLeod,

president of Manitoba Conference, assuring us that the session of Knox Church, Winnipeg, was remembering us in their prayers. In June, Manitoba Conference passed the following resolution: "We commend Knox Church, Russell, for pioneering in the Church Attendance Crusade."

Chairmen of the various committees were as follows: Publicity and Promotion, J. Burgess; Visitation, L. Margetts; Fellowship, R. G. Smellie; Registration, V. Warrian; Steering Committee, A. Hart and C. Foster; Clerk of Session, C. Whitmer.

Largest Attendance

Often it is asked, "What about after the Crusade?" I can truthfully state that in May and June our attendance was the largest in our congregation's history for the same period.

Now, we are looking forward to a second Crusade when we plan to use the personal commitment and receive a greater blessing from God. Looking back, we can testify that our corporate desire was

And for Thy sake to win renown
And then to gain the victor's crown,
And at Thy feet to lay them down
O Jesus Christ, I come.

WORLD WIDE CHURCH ATTENDANCE MOVEMENT

Church Attendance Packet

Each packet contains sufficient materials for the thorough promotion of a church attendance movement for a church of its size. Also each packet contains samples of many other items which you may secure later if you desire. So order the packet now.

Only 3¢ per Member

Although each of these packets contains 16 different items, in necessary quantities, the price of each packet is within the reach of every church—only 3¢ per member—and the extra attendance and loyalty generated will bring enough financial returns to more than pay for the packet. But don't order a packet for that reason. Order it for the good of your church and the glory of God.

	Church Membership	*Price*		*Church Membership*	*Price*		*Church Membership*	*Price*
No. 1	100	$ 3.00	No. 4½	450	13.50	No. 7½	750	22.50
No. 1½	150	4.50	No. 5	500	15.00	No. 8	800	24.00
No. 2	200	6.00	No. 5½	550	16.50	No. 8½	850	25.50
No. 2½	250	7.50	No. 6	600	18 00	No. 9	900	27.00
No. 3	300	9.00	No. 6½	650	19.50	No. 9½	950	28.50
No. 3½	350	10.50	No. 7	700	21.00	No. 10	1,000	30.00
No. 4	400	12.00						

Materials in the Packet

(The following materials are in the Church Attendance Packets in recommended quantities, but may be ordered separately, if desired.)

Local Church Booklet 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Community Booklet (1 copy in packet) 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Instructions for Visitors (a few in each packet, for leaders of Instruction Conference) 5¢ each, 10 or more, 4¢ each

Visitor's Guidance Folder (one for every visitor) 2¢ each

Friendly Visitor's Agreement cards (for enlisting the visitors) 50¢ per 100

Church Attendance Visitor's Assignment cards (for assigning the visitors to the homes they are to visit) 60¢ per 100

Church Attendance Graph (for making a visual graph of your Sunday-by-Sunday attendance) 15¢ each

Church Loyalty Assignment Envelopes (for use by your visitors) 10¢ a dozen; 75¢ per 100

Door Knob cards (for visitors to leave where people are not at home) 1¢ each; $1.00 per 100

Church Member's Loyalty Covenant cards (the basic card—for every member) 50¢ per 100

My Record of Attendance cards (for a member to keep record of his own attendance) 50¢ per 100

Posters, 17x22 inches (for church vestibules, bulletin boards, and elsewhere) 10¢ each; 6 for 50¢

Window Cards, 11x8½ (containing the emblem, "The Answer Is God") 5¢ each; 6 for 25¢; 100 or more, 3½¢ each

Sheets of Stamps (100 two-color stamps to sheet, containing the emblem) 20¢ per sheet

1-column **Newspaper Mats** (containing the emblem) 15¢ each

2-column **Newspaper Mats** (containing the emblem) 20¢ each

Pastor's Resource Book (containing helpful ideas that might be promoted to good effect. Invaluable) 25¢ each

1908 Grand Avenue **World Wide Church Attendance Movement** **Nashville 5, Tennessee**

Launching the

Church Attendance Movement

Suggestions for DECEMBER UNTIL CHRISTMAS

√ Let all materials be ordered, on hand, understood, ready for use.

√ Let the Commission on Membership and Evangelism complete all necessary preparations at its December meeting.

√ Let the executive committee (chairmen of all the committees and the pastor) have a meeting so that chairmen will be ready to lead their committees wisely immediately after Christmas.

√ Let the visitors be secured for the visitation beginning New Year's Sunday, and pledged to be present for the Sunday afternoon visitation.

√ Let the visitors be "paired off" in advance for "two by two" visitations.

√ Let everything be made in readiness for a full week of activity between Christmas and New Year's, even to clearing with local radio and newspapers for time and space for forthcoming announcements and articles.

Suggestions for WEEK OF CHRISTMAS TO NEW YEAR'S

√ On Christmas Sunday announce the Attendance Movement in your church bulletin, from the pulpit, and in every class and organization.

√ Have from one to three announcements and articles (including a paid announcement) in your newspaper during the week.

√ Begin the first of the Newspaper Mat Series in your local paper, if you are going to run this series.

√ Mail the printed letter (bought for the purpose) or a letter of your own composition—or the printed postal announcement—to every home and/or member and constituent.

√ Put up window cards, vestibule posters, and other announcement material that came in the Packet.

√ Put up roadside poster, church lawn poster, and whatever other such materials have been ordered.

√ Have "minute" speakers in civic clubs and all community organizations.

√ Have church secretary and Committee on Friendly Membership Visitation place on the "Church Attendance Assignment Cards" (by families and individuals) the names, addresses, and other pertinent information of all your church members (and names of other members of their families, and of constituents, if desired).

√ Group these "Assignment Cards" according to geographical territory for convenience in visiting, putting approximately 10 cards in each group. Place each group of about 10 cards in an "Assignment Envelope," and assign each envelope to a team for visitors at the Visitation Instruction meeting on the first Sunday afternoon. This is most important and must be done before Sunday.

√ In these "Assignment Envelopes" place also a sufficient number of "Church Member's Loyalty Covenant" cards and also a sufficient number of "My Record of Attendance" cards, so that one of each may be given to each member visited. In these envelopes place two of the "Visitor's Guidance Folders," one for each visitor that he may review the instruction and check up on his visiting from time to time. Also place two "door knob" cards in each envelope, for families not at home.

√ Ask whatever prayer group you have to pray for the Movement.

√ Wherever it can be carried out, a special prayer meeting (even an all-night "come and go" prayer vigil with each half hour assigned to specific persons) will avail much.

√ Have everything in readiness for a great opening Sunday.

Suggestions for NEW YEAR'S SUNDAY

Grandly begin, If you have time
For only a line, be that sublime.

√ If your church has an early worship service, start with that in presenting the "Church Member's Loyalty Covenant Card." Have the cards signed and brought to the altar for Communion and/or prayer.

√ Present "Church Member's Loyalty Covenant Cards" at each Sunday school class, from the Junior Class on up through all the adult classes. Ask them to bring the cards (without fail) to the morning worship service for signing and presentation at the altar.

√ Have a great Sunday Morning Worship Service built around the presentation and signing of the "Church Member's Loyalty Covenant Cards" and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which itself is a covenant with Christ, a *pledge* and an *intention* to lead a new life. A suggested Service of Worship for this occasion is available, and helps and suggestions are given in the Pastor's Resource Book.

√ Have a skilled group of persons, preferably the com-

Promotional Materials for the 1956

Church Attendance Movement

Only samples of the following helpful materials are in the Church Attendance Packet. For quantities, order them separately and get extra results.

Letterheads, 8½x11 inches, mimeograph paper, 75¢ per 100
Letterhead says "World Wide Church Attendance Movement," and contains the "The Answer Is God" emblem, and another brief statement.

Printed Letters, 8½x11 inches $1.00 per 100
On the above letterhead, an appropriate letter is printed, ready for signing and mailing to members and constituents. It announces the Church Attendance Movement and requests full cooperation.

Church Bulletins $1.00 per 100
A printed bulletin, for use on the first Sunday or early in the Movement. Delivered flat, so that inside of bulletin may be mimeographed or printed locally with local church program announcements.

Bulletin Inserts (5 in set) 5¢ per set
Five different two-color (5½x8½) bulletin inserts, printed on both sides and ready for inserting in your regular bulletin. Designed to stimulate church attendance and individual and family devotions. Minimum order, 50 sets.

Personal Invitation Cards $1.00 per 100
A card folder, containing the "The Answer Is God" emblem, and a personal invitation to attend church. Designed to be signed by an individual or church official and handed or mailed to persons.

"Fill a Pew Plan" leaflet 10 or more, 3¢ each
A practical plan for building up church attendance. Each pew captain will need a leaflet. Single copies, 5¢ each.

Hymnal Bands $1.00 per 100
A band to go around front cover of hymnal, advertise the Movement, and furnish special Responsive Reading for it. Minimum order, 50.

Certificate of Loyalty $1.00 per 100
To issue at the close of the Movement to those who have been especially faithful in attendance. Minimum order, 25.

World Wide Church Attendance Movement

1908 Grand Avenue

Nashville 5, Tennessee

mittee which prepared the assignment cards during the week (since they are familiar with them), to check on the assignment cards the names of all persons who signed the "Church Member's Loyalty Covenant Card" at the morning services. This will have to be done before the Instruction Conference at 2:30 o'clock. If this is an impossible task, the visitors will understand when church members tell them that they have already signed a card.

√ Hold a Visitor's Instruction Conference Sunday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock, following which the visitors will go out to visit in the homes of every member.

VISITORS' INSTRUCTION CONFERENCE

Probably the best time is 2:30 o'clock, New Year's Sunday afternoon.

Churches that cannot have it then are urged to have it on the following Sunday afternoon.

The pastor should lead this Conference and give the instruction, aided by the chairman of the Friendly Membership Visitation Committee and the chairman of the Commission on Membership and Evangelism.

The pastor and/or other leaders will be guided by the booklet, "Instruction for Visitors," several copies of which will be found in the Church Attendance Packet. He will read this booklet and master it in advance, even noting the difference between the covenant card in it and the new, revised Covenant Card that will actually be used.

He will carefully instruct the visitors in the various points in the booklet—especially the purpose, the do's, the don't's, meeting excuses, securing the signed covenants, etc.

He will make the visitors thoroughly familiar with the three cards in the "assignment envelope": (1) the "assignment" card which tells the visitor where he is to go and whom he is to visit; (2) the "covenant" card which the member is to carefully and prayerfully sign and hand back to the visitor to be returned to the church; and (3) the "record of attendance" card which is to be left with each member as a reminder of his covenant and as a means whereby he may check his own faithfulness in attending.

He will familiarize the visitors with any other material, like *The Upper Room* or other devotional helps and church information that might be given to the visitor to leave in each home.

He will explain to the visitor that the "Visitor's Guidance Folder" in the envelope is for the visitor himself to read later as a "review" and to refer to during the week.

This part of the instruction should take from 30 to 40 minutes.

How the visitors will be "paired off" will be announced, as nearly according to previous planning as possible, and an "assignment envelope" given each pair of visitors for "two by two" visitation.

The visitors will be asked to complete their visitation as soon as possible, calling back upon the homes where members and individual persons were not at home. These callbacks should be made on Monday and Tuesday evenings in the hope that all visitation will be completed by Wednesday evening.

Announcement should be made concerning a Report Meeting of the Visitors. Suggested times are after Sunday evening church service, Wednesday evening, and the last and final time on the second Sunday evening. Visitors will be asked to keep calling until every person is seen, so that every member will be visited, will make a covenant, and will be blessed by the Movement.

Go at once to visit. Visit every possible home and person that afternoon and early evening.

MATERIALS FOR THE 1956 WORLD WIDE CHURCH ATTENDANCE MOVEMENT

January 1 to Easter

ONE of the most outstanding facts characterizing our nation today is a genuine hunger for a transforming religious experience. Wherever men and women are presenting a positive gospel, with its message of hope and its foundation for faith, thousands are committing themselves to the divine cause by accepting the claims of the Master upon their lives.

A great movement is sweeping across our land! In hamlets and in villages, in towns and in cities, people are going to church! Never has there been such interest in public worship as now! Never have so many souls been won for Christ!

Victory Begets Responsibility

But every victory we achieve only creates a greater responsibility to be met. To meet this challenge the World Wide Church Attendance Movement has been launched to call individuals to a deeper consecration and a more active participation in things relating to the Kingdom of our Christ. The program has a twofold emphasis: the worship of God in church every week and the worship of God at home every day. Through these two channels the movement summons people to place themselves where God can get at them. Simple in its mechanics, the program is nonetheless profound in its effect where individuals make themselves susceptible to God's influence by worshiping in His House every week and by worshiping in their homes every day.

Using as its slogan, "The Answer Is God," the World Wide Church Attendance Movement enables pastors and people to reach the unreached *for* Christ and to strengthen the churched *in* Christ. To do this, however, pastors, official board members, church school teachers, and other leaders must be like the Macedonian Christians, who "first gave their own selves to the Lord." Therefore, they must be the first to sign the Church Member's Loyalty Covenant first, in their hearts, and, second, on the cards. Then they must live it out every day. Following this personal commitment, they can promote it in every class and church organization, by mail and direct visit and through organized visitation in every home, in sermon and in teaching, in public press, and over the air.

Publicity

To publicize this program, churches should use effective promotional materials.

Available from the World Wide Church Attendance Movement, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee, are the following:

Billboard Posters — **$10.00 each**

Large 24-sheet roadside billboard posters (19ft. 4 in. by 8 ft. 6 in.) containing two-color emblem, "The Answer Is God." This is one of the best ways of advertising. Community organizations may order 10 or more at $8.00 each, if cash accompanies order.

Lawn Signs — **$5.00 each**

Two-color emblem, "The Answer Is God," on canvas, 5 ft. by 3 ft., for erection on church lawns and other public places. Get one for your church or every cooperating church in your community. Community organizations may order five or more at $4.00 each, if cash accompanies order.

Auto Bumper Strips — **25 for $3.00**

Two-color bumper strips with "Day-Glo" ink containing the wording: "The Answer Is God: Worship Him at Church, at Home." Sold only in lots of 25.

Newspaper Mat Series — **$5.00 per series**

Twelve different, large two-column mats seven inches deep. Each mat is practical and prepared to appear weekly in your newspaper, to promote the Church Attendance Movement. The name of church or sponsoring agency may be added at the bottom.

Movie Trailers — **$7.50 each**

Non-denominational movie trailer, that theaters will be glad to run. Contains message on church attendance and the emblem, "The Answer Is God." Professionally made. 35mm. Runs about 40 seconds.

TV Trailer — **$10.00 each**

A 16mm. TV film, 59 seconds in length, using the emblem, "The Answer Is God," and urging church attendance every week. Dramatic. Professionally done. Undated. May be used over and over again. Your TV station will be glad to cooperate if you furnish the film.

TV Slides (3 to set) — **$3.00 the set**

Three slides on the theme, "The Answer Is God," advocating the worship of Him in Church every week and at home every day. Accompanied by script.

Posters, 17x22 inches — **10¢ each; 6 for 50¢**

Beautiful two-color posters emphasizing the Attendance Movement and the value of worship. Each packet contains from one to six. Order 25 or more at 6¢ each.

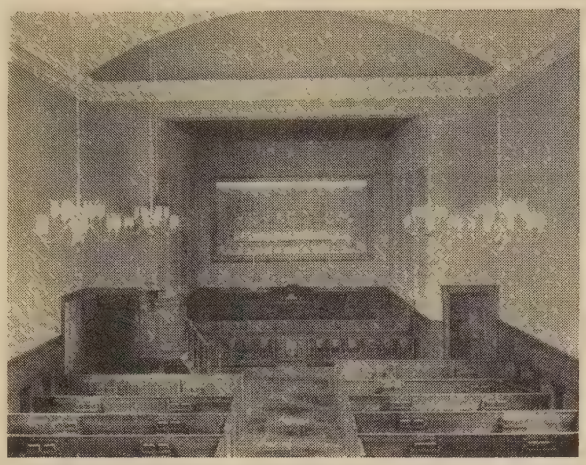
Window cards, 11x8½ inches — **5¢ each; 6 for 25¢**

Beautiful two-color cards giving the "The Answer Is God" emblem. Contain place for church name to be printed locally, if desired. Put these cards in merchants' windows and other public places. Each packet contains from two to 24 of these cards. Order 100 or more at 3½¢ each.

Sheets of 100 Stamps — **20¢ per sheet of 100**

For use on letters from the church, the pastor, and officials. Each packet contains from one half to 10 sheets. Order 100 sheets or more (10,000 stamps) at 15¢ per sheet.

Visitors Inspired by The Upper Room



Services are held in The Upper Room Chapel each Wednesday morning from 8:15 to 8:45

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO WORSHIP WITH US

THE UPPER ROOM CHAPEL is open to visitors at all times. There is no admission charge. Any group desiring a special worship service or a communion service may contact Miss Katherine Campbell, Chapel Hostess.

People from all over the world have found to visit The Upper Room Chapel is a heartwarming experience. During the months of June, July, and August 7,510 guests signed the register with many others attending services. Visitors came from 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Alaska—every state except Nevada, North Dakota, and New Hampshire, and these three had been represented during previous months. Thirty-two countries were represented during these three summer months. They were:

Algeria	Cuba	Japan
Austria	England	Korea
Belgium	Germany	Liberia
Brazil	Haiti	Malaya
Burma	Hawaii	Mexico
Canada	Hong Kong	Mozambique
Chile	India	Norway
China	Iran	Southern Rhodesia
Congo belge	South Africa	Uruguay
Philippines	Sweden	Venezuela
Costa Rica	Jamaica	

Fourteen regular Wednesday morning chapel services were held with local speakers and some from a distance who were attending conferences in Nashville. Among them were Dr. Charles T. Thrift, Jr., vice-president of Florida Southern College; Reverend Eugene Lovell, missionary in the Belgian Congo; Miss Violeta Garallero of Montevideo, Uruguay; and Dr. W. Hartley Totty of Jamaica.

One hundred thirty-four groups met for communion services, worship services and the interpretation, including the Executive Committee of the Tennessee Conference; young people from Detroit Conference; Little Rock Conference; Boston Avenue Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Illinois Conference; Searcy, Arkansas; a group of girls from Central Kansas Conference; an octette from Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania; and a group from the State Convention of Postal Supervisors Auxiliary.

One afternoon Miss Katherine Campbell, The Upper Room Chapel Hostess, had found a group of eleven- and twelve-year-old girls especially receptive as she gave her interpretation of the wood carving of The Last Supper and all the symbols which have been included in creating the sacredness of the chapel. The group, Dorothy Griffin, Freida Jutton, Cecil Murphy, and Jeanette Patterson from Nashville, Tennessee, had been brought to the chapel by Miss Faye Straley, a Scarritt College student who did field work at Bethlehem Center.

As the interpretation drew to a close, one of the girls said, "May we sing the Lord's Prayer?" When permission was granted, the four girls dropped to their knees at the altar and in lovely harmony began to sing the prayer given to the disciples. Miss Campbell related that she and Miss Straley almost unconsciously went to their knees and felt strangely uplifted as they shared a uniquely sacred moment.

People from near and far, from every walk in life, have come to behold the beauty and receive the glory of The Upper Room Chapel which was completed in April, 1953, and where all who desire may come to worship.

A group of girls from the Bethlehem Center in Nashville, Tennessee, were so moved upon hearing the interpretation of the wood carving of *The Last Supper* asked if they might sing "The Lord's Prayer," which they did kneeling. From left to right: Jeanette Patterson, Frieda Jutton, Cecil Murphy, and Dorothy Griffin.

Every Layman an Evangelist

by C. D. Hilliard
Layman, The Methodist Church
Obion, Tennessee

HOW can the individual who has experienced the saving grace of Jesus Christ not feel a sense of obligation to share this good news with someone else?

The very nature of the gospel of Christ demands it. When Christ left this earth to return to His former glory, He made no other provision for the salvation of the world than that His disciples tell others the story of His saving grace, both by precept and by example.

Society is made up of individuals, and the mass can be reached for Christ only as the individuals that compose it are brought one by one to know Him as Lord and Saviour.

A Helpless Creature

Man is not an independent being designed to spend his life planning only for himself. When we consider him in his infancy—more helpless than any of the newborn of the lower animal creation—we see that for months and years he is incapable of providing for even the least of his needs, being utterly and completely dependent on the loving nurture and care of the members of his household. Is not this a proof of the creative design of the Almighty to teach the discerning individual the beautiful concept of his interdependence and his eternal obligation to contribute by kind and friendly acts to the happiness of his fellow man? Only as we learn well the lesson of our dependence can we fulfill the divine duties of reciprocal love and helpfulness.

No happiness is comparable to that which comes when one lives in daily contact with the Spirit of Christ, and no greater contribution can be made to the individual than to bring him to know Christ as Lord and Saviour.

This experience is the fulfillment of the divine intent for every man. Hence, every Christian layman inherits this obligation so to serve his Lord.

In the parable of the talents and the pounds, Christ praised those who gave themselves in the interest of their Lord and condemned the man who felt no impelling obligation to invest in the Kingdom's work. No man is left exempt from this duty, be he great or small.

We are created with different abilities, yet this diversity of life is the wisdom of life. The multitude of men with the one talent can surely give effective testimony to what Christ means in their lives.

It is a natural thing to tell our friends any good news or good fortune that comes our way. Why should it not be just as natural to tell the good news of our salvation?

The Bible is replete with the urgency of this admonition. When Andrew found Christ, he immediately brought his brother Simon to Him. What service he performed! You and I may be the means of bringing to Him someone who may become a mighty power for righteousness.

When Christ revealed Himself to the woman at the well, she left her waterpots, went into the city, and brought all the men of the town to Christ. Again, when the unknown man cleansed of unclean spirits sought to follow Christ, he was told to go to his friends and tell them what good things the Lord had done for Him. The story says that the men marveled at his testimony.

Here we learn where to begin and what to say. We must go to our friends and to the members of our household and tell them what great things the Lord has done for us.

A Way of Life

Christianity is not something for argument or controversy. It is a way of life patterned after the ministry of Jesus Christ. As such, it is divinely designed to enable a man so to live here that when he leaves this world for that far distant realm whence he shall never return, he may hear those welcoming words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Personal evangelism is the impact one person makes on another for Christ —not to get him to accept a certain creed or to join a certain Church, but to accept Christ as personal Saviour and to enthrone Him Lord of life.

To bear effective witness for Christ and His Kingdom, one must possess the following essentials:

1. *He must know Jesus Christ as personal Saviour.* One must be convinced in his own life of Christ's power to save sinners.
2. *He must live a clean life.* One's life in his church and community cannot be contrary to his testimony. A clean Christian life is the most convincing proof of Christ's transforming power.
3. *He must lead a prayer life.* A significant fact of Christ's life was His prayer life. He admonished men to pray. By prayer one is brought into happy communion with God, learns His will for life, increases in faith, and finds strength and direction for daily living.
4. *He must possess a genuine love for lost men.* A Christian's influence and testimony must give evidence of his love and interest in the welfare of men's souls.
5. *He must be filled with the Holy Spirit.* The spirit-filled layman is sensitive to the direction and obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It was said of Philip that the Spirit told him to join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch. Filled with the Spirit, he obeyed.
6. *He must have a profound belief in the teachings of the Bible concerning lost men.* "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "Those who reject Christ are lost." "But the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The Apostle Paul declares that Christ is able to save to the uttermost. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (all kinds of sinners).

All laymen who are genuinely Christian are evangelists. Let us accept our true status and give ourselves faithfully to the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we may be so used.

EVERY PASTOR AN EVANGELIST

by Chester Burl Smith
Professor, Huntingdon College
and
Pastor, Barnes-Prospect Charge
North Indiana Conference

THE evangelistic urge in the Christian Church is not man-made. Nor has man been able to get out from under its mandate. We go back to our Lord for our purpose and our method. Any authority short of His might be contested.

The Saviour spoke His last words on the mountain at His last appearance to His apostles. The last words of a loved one are always the most prized. They are not to be forgotten or ignored. Jesus commanded the men who had followed Him, "Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of every creature . . ."

Why we choose to call that the "Great Commission" is beyond the comprehension of this writer. It is *THE COMMISSION*—the only commission. It implies no lesser commissions, as does "The Great Commission." It is the only set of marching orders the Church has received from her Lord.

Jesus says, "Go and preach, teaching them to observe. . . ." There has been no rescinding, no transmuting, of these orders. They are the program under which we are operating today, even as men did in Apostolic times. Jesus said, "All creatures." And within the lifetime of those men who heard His voice, the gospel was carried around the Mediterranean. In a few centuries, it was heard over all Europe, except for the extreme northern and eastern fringe, and far into Asia.

Then the Church, beginning with Charlemagne, became accepted. Respected, it was no longer hunted and oppressed. It became wealthy, had properties to maintain and protect. It became self-centered, instead of message-centered, and set itself to administering an empire. The zeal for spreading the gospel died there.

Sporadic Efforts

True, sporadic efforts have sprung up, flourished, and borne their fruit. But the primary purpose of the Church has remained a changed matter from what it was in Apostolic days. Various movements, such as the Mendicants, or "Beggars," the Friars, the Waldenses, and many others culminating in the revivals of our era, have flared up; but there has always been a "settling down," a return to normalcy and the serving of tables again.

Much is said about the "call" of the minister. More was said a few decades ago, and it has always been an examining-point in most branches of the evangelical Christian Church. To what is a minister called? To exercise social "graces"? To be sure, these are more or less important. To feed the flock? That is necessary. But where the consciousness of "call" ends there, the called one is destined to a very dull kind of existence. The same is true where he feels he is to be a mediator of "social justice and righteousness." All these things are important, beyond doubt. All are implied in the call to the Christian ministry. Certainly, each has a proper place.

But any and all of these activities that may fill the daily schedule of a Christian minister, lacking a call to preach the living gospel, will surely create a sense of frustration on the part of the minister and a sense of his inadequacy in the minds of his parishioners. Much of what we do in the Church today could not be classified as "winning the world."

Proclaim Saving Grace

Undoubtedly, the crowning duty of a Christian pastor is to proclaim the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and to mediate that grace to fallen, lost humanity. Where this urge is lacking in the call, the inspiration to plough on through obstacles is often sadly absent.

Many defeated preachers have walked through the pages of history. But few of these were characterized by a great evangelistic zeal. True, circumstances have brought to such men of passion a sense of frustration. But many more times the pastor who felt he was called to win men to Christ has come out of a very difficult parish situation with colors flying because he persisted until he won some converts. Thus, he vindicated his call and purpose.

Methodism needs to face her field of labor honestly today. She was born through the experience of a warm heart and a revival effort. The needs of men have not changed, as one gathers in reading English history of the age of the Wesleys. The attitude of the Church may have changed as a result of many forces moving in the world of thought; but when she surrenders her passion for the spiritual life of men, she has not been defeated—she has walked out of the field, leaving those for whom the Saviour died at the mercy of their enemies.

Our Bishops have implored us to get out and after them. We are not to expect them to come to us. What wisdom! We are to ring doorbells or find them at their work. Above all, we are to get them.

Make Disciples

These leaders have simply given voice to the command of Jesus to "make disciples of every creature." Recent movements here and there in Methodism have indicated a renewed interest in leading men to decisions for Christ. The Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Assurance may be due for a renewed emphasis. The world could certainly stand some of that today. Given this doctrine, persons filled with neuroses, psychoses, and myriad other symptoms of being out of joint with God and man might come to a sense of personal satisfaction with the Christ of Calvary. This was the message of The Methodist Church a few generations ago, and it was timeless because it was so timely. It met the need of the day.

One may use any of the accepted methods of winning men. Visitation, Preaching, Personal (each one win one), or Pastoral Evangelism are all effective and at our hand. One can scarcely argue for any particular method. All have borne fruit in the experience of the writer. Many times results have come, often unexpectedly, far out of proportion to any human effort.

In one charge, completely surrounded by Methodist charges and located in a

field said to be "picked-over," we saw a list of 75 possible prospects boil down to actually 72. After a visitation that was carefully "planned and prayed," 35 persons presented themselves to Christ and sought church membership. The majority were adults. About 24 were first decisions. Almost every one has given evidence of a change of attitude and action.

Fine results come from the rededication that the visitors make as a result of a feeling of their own inadequacy. Visitation requires careful preparation and supervision, with lots of "sparking" lest it offer merely an invitation to join the Church. Spiritual value is largely lost for the person who goes through the process of becoming a member without experiencing a deep sense of a change of mind and attitude. Too often he has been cheated out of the opportunity to gain that experience, and it is difficult to reach him after he is a member.

Premature reception of members without sufficient follow-up also brings a sense of failure to the serious-minded visitor who tried to enlist him for Christ. The whole process then degrades to one of "watering down" the church membership vows.

The Preaching Revival

The Preaching Revival, as it is still called in many parts of the Church, has not lost its pull. The preacher and the musicians, who act as a team, must have sufficient preparation. The technique includes a facility in mass psychology. Sermons must be well prepared and preached for a verdict. The preacher must be as bold as the insurance salesman who checks to see that his pen is not dry when he meets his prospect. Needy persons will be there to hear the sermon. He must expect results. They will surely come.

The song leader needs not only a thorough grounding in the lore of church music and the techniques of getting people to sing. He needs also the "light touch." He must get the congregation in the mood of readiness for accepting the word to be preached. Then he must drop out of sight when the preacher takes over.

The gospel has not lost its attractiveness when it is well presented. The "Day of Revivals" is past only for those leaders who will not give it a try. Humanity still responds to a message of love freely given. It is a rewarding sight to see a row of hungry persons kneeling to receive the gift of life. And there must be provision for pointing them to the way of faith and acceptance. Many local churches have been renewed, official members have renewed their vows, and the entire program of the Church has been revitalized by this means.

The late John Timothy Stone, pastor of Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, was a great exponent of Pastoral Evangelism. He told of hundreds of persons won to Christ by his own pastoral contacts. The late Bishop Adna Leonard remarked in Annual Conference one day that his ministry had come to life when he decided to speak to at least one person a day about becoming a Christian. It does something for the preacher, and certainly increases his usefulness to parish and community, when he shows genuine interest in the lives of persons about him.

Many persons have been won to Christ during a "Win-My-Chum Week" or other similar personal evangelism effort. This leaves it to the "grassroots" much as in the Apostolic times. Such work will need much care, prayer, and supervision; but it can be very rewarding.

Usually, the best results come from a combination of these methods. Certainly, leaders in the local church are qualified to apply them.

Work Must Be Done

This work must be done. There is no alternative to it except to surrender the world to forces that are destroying life on a personal basis and are hammering at the very gates of the Church. The enemies of Christ still are much as they were when they stood by the Cross and scoffed. There is no let-up in the warfare of the Cross. Materialism in its various ramifications is as degrading as the experiences to which it gave rise in the days of Baal-worship, when the prophets of God thundered their defiance and called Israel to repent.

Humanism and Unitarianism have emasculated the gospel they preach until much of the world is in despair, lacking the sharp, trumpet-note of hope. Humanity today needs the knowledge of a redemption that is supernatural in origin, not of its own making, for man has failed to lift himself.

The Christian pastor is the key to the situation. He has the broken strands of human life in his hands. If he would be a laborer worthy of his hire, he must know how to knit them together with the divine that order may come to chaotic personalities. It is a glorious calling, the Christian ministry. We must glorify and dignify this calling by paying the price of spiritual leadership. We must set the course, or we and the Church shall pay the price of our neglect.

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Every District Superintendent an Evangelist

by A. E. Acey
Superintendent
Danville District
Virginia Annual Conference

PAUL admonished young Timothy, when he went forth to assume his duties as a pastor, that he "do the work of an evangelist." This might be the commission given by the Bishop of an Annual Conference when he sends his District Superintendent to assume the varied tasks of his office.

In the early days of the Church—in fact until quite recent times—it was not difficult to define the "work of an evangelist." He was one who conducts revivals. Some ministers were designated as "evangelist-preachers," meaning that they had the particular ability to lead men to make decisions for the Christian life. To do the work of an evangelist in the modern Church means that the minister must be versed in many methods in order to bring people into a vital relationship with Christ and His Church.

An Evangelist at Heart

Since the District Superintendent is commissioned to lead his ministers in the total program of the Church, and since the evangelistic emphasis gives meaning to everything else that the minister does, the District Superintendent should be an evangelist in the fullest sense of the word. Assuming that the District Superintendent is an evangelist at heart, we may well look at some of the many duties which provide him with evangelistic opportunities.

Along with the other ministers, the District Superintendent should be familiar with the over-all evangelistic program of his Church. He should know what the General Conference has to say about the quadrennial emphasis on evangelism. Through SHEPHERDS magazine he can keep himself informed as to the nature and methods of recommended evangelistic programs. As a member of the Conference Board of Evangelism, he helps to plan the Conference program. He should thus attend both the regular and the called meetings of the Board for the purpose of representing the needs of his District as well as to help plan the Conference-wide efforts to reach men for the Christian life.

The District Superintendent should likewise give much care to the selection of his District Committee on Evangelism. When he is familiar with the over-all program of evangelism and the program of his Conference Board, he is better able to adapt these programs to the needs of his District.

One Conference Board of Evangelism designates one of its members to meet with each of the District Committees on Evangelism early in the Conference year. The fact that the Conference Board goes to the expense and effort to have a representative present causes the local Superintendent and his committee to plan a more purposeful program. This particular plan is followed up by having District or sub-District mass meetings of charge Commissions on Membership and Evangelism. At these meetings a representative of the Conference Board again presents the total program for the Conference, the District, and the charge. This takes the program down to the local church. The lay members leave such a meeting better informed as to the part they may play in their church's evangelistic efforts. Needless to say, the District Superintendent, along with his District Committee, has a great responsibility in seeing that this mass meeting is carefully planned and conducted.

In order to keep alive his evangelistic passion, one District Superintendent requested his ministers to keep him informed as to persons upon whom he could call when he visited their particular community. These names were added to his prayer list. On the day of a visit to a given community, the Superintendent would leave home in time to make the calls he had set for himself for that day. Often he knew that the names given him were the more difficult ones on the prospect list. This Superintendent set for himself a goal of a given number of persons he would seek to win for Christ every year. Needless to say, this personal example of the District Superintendent's interest in evangelism was felt in the total District program. It is possible that some of the pastors found that the District Superintendent was winning more people to Christ on their charges than they were themselves.

As a sort of "Exhibit A" as to how visitation evangelism should be conducted, a Superintendent asked his ministers to help him on the more difficult places on the District. He would take eight or 10 ministers to one of the weaker charges or churches. After an early evening meal at the local church, each of the ministers teamed up with a local layman for calls on those whose names the pastor had prepared in advance. With the teams making an average of three calls in one evening, approximately 30 family units were contacted. In addition to the immediate results in the lives of those who made their first commitments to Christ or asked for the transfer of their membership, the local pastor had several laymen who had received training in visitation evangelism. These became members of the local "Fishermen's Club" and led other laymen to become members of the Club.

The District Superintendent is always interested in the statistical reports made by his ministers to the District and Annual Conference sessions. As important as each item may be, none has more significance than those dealing with membership changes. Each "gain" or "loss" tabulation may be an indicator of the evangelistic emphasis of the local church program.

A Concerned Leader

In the Quarterly Conference and in private talks with the minister, the Superintendent can do much to help analyze the evangelistic record of the church, be it good or bad. In particular, the Superintendent should be alert to "barren," or nearly "barren," charges on his District. In these more difficult situations, he might well offer his services for meetings with the Local Church Commission on Membership and Evangelism. This should be done, of course, with the full understanding of the pastor that his concern is to help the charge meet its responsibility as an evangelistic agency in the community.

Many of the contacts which the Superintendent has with the laymen have to do with the financial program of the District. Unless he uses care in the presentation of the work of the Church as a whole, the laymen may feel that his major concern is for the "material" things rather than for those of the spirit. As the Superintendent promotes the work of the Men's Club and other specific laymen's activities, he has the opportunity to let it be known that the winning of men to Christ is the primary purpose of every activity of the church. He should help men to see that the program of the laymen's groups is but a means to an end and that the end is two-fold: deepening the lives of church members and winning new members to Christ and His Church.

Another significant potential for evangelism is found in the Woman's Society of Christian Service. As the Superintendent attends the regular and special meetings of the District Society, he should be alert to the opportunities offered to urge the women to keep the evangelistic emphasis central. The Secretary of the Spiritual Life Committee of the District organization is a member of the District Committee on Evangelism. She is thus able to represent the District program in planning meetings held by the women.

One of the greatest evangelistic potentials for the District Superintendent is in the realm of youth activities. The sub-District and District groups, with their frequent meetings, provide excellent opportunities for leading youth in the motives and methods of evangelism. The Christian Witness Mission has proved to be an effective medium for youth evangelism. The Superintendent who informs himself of this modern and effective method of reaching youth for Christ, and adapts it to the needs of his people, is using one of the greatest opportunities of his District ministry.

Use of Missions

Every pastor of Methodism should have some knowledge of the results to be obtained by the use of the United Evangelistic Mission and the Spiritual Life Mission. Each of these efforts lends itself to the District-centered evangelistic program directed by the Superintendent with the assistance of the District Committee on Evangelism.

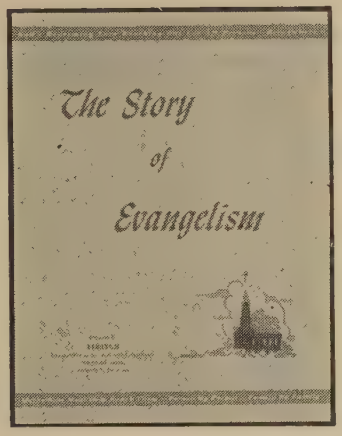
At his regular preaching appointments the Superintendent has his best chance to indicate his interest in evangelism. If he uses the pulpit solely to promote the "program" of his District, he may convey to the laymen the idea that he is more concerned with the program than he is with the people. If, through his preaching, he is careful to place the emphasis on the deepening of the spiritual life of his hearers, he is more likely to get the ear of the laymen when he must promote the other areas of the work.

Truly, the District Superintendent is called to do the work of an evangelist. There are many demands upon his time and efforts. However, he has the assurance of all but unlimited aids for his tasks. In no area of his work are there more resources than in the field of evangelism.

The General Board of Evangelism has long recognized that the District in the Methodist system offers the best medium through which to promote an effective program of evangelism. Therefore, the Board offers its staff and its promotional facilities to the Superintendents. SHEPHERDS magazine, the many tracts and leaflets, and other evangelistic publications provide him with the best known methods for the promotion of his job.

Unlimited Fields

The Superintendent who accepts the call to "do the work of an evangelist" will find unlimited fields of labor as he comes into intimate contact with his ministers and with thousands of laymen on his District.



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S. E. McCreless

The McCreless Chair of Evangelism

Mrs. S. E. McCreless

ESTABLISHMENT of a new professorship in the field of evangelism at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology was recently announced by the University's President, Willis M. Tate, who called it a progressive step in the training of students to become effective Methodist ministers.

Mr. and Mrs. S. E. McCreless of San Antonio have endowed the new professorship, which will be called the McCreless Chair of Evangelism of the Perkins School of Theology.

Nominated to Southern Methodist University's Board of Trustees for election as the McCreless Professor of Evangelism is Dr. George C. Baker, Jr. Dr. Baker, chaplain at the University since 1949, has withdrawn from this office and from his position as professor of homiletics in the School of Theology to accept the tentative appointment.

Mr. McCreless, a former Southern Methodist University student, is president of the American Hospital & Life Insurance Company of San Antonio. He is a member of the Board of Evangelism of The Methodist Church. Mrs. McCreless is a member of the national Methodist Board of Missions.

Merrimon Cuninggim, Dean of the Perkins School of Theology, called the McCreless gift "one of the most significant donations made to theological education in this country in recent years."

Said Dean Cuninggim: "It constitutes the first named professorship in Perkins School of Theology. We are deeply grateful to have such significant help in enlarging our program of evangelism."

Dr. Baker, the dean said, will not merely teach separate courses in the field of evangelism, but will bring the emphasis of evangelism into the various other fields covered by the theological courses.

Commenting on the establishment of the McCreless Chair of Evangelism, Sterling F. Wheeler, Vice President, Southern Methodist University, wrote to Mr. McCreless:

"We are all here quite thrilled by the appointment of George C. Baker, Jr., to this post. I am quite convinced that he will do a great pioneering piece of work and I have no doubt that the years will see the establishment of a Chair of Evangelism as one of the major strokes of genius in theological education in our time.

"I cannot say how thrilled I am to observe a turn toward the evangelistic emphasis in theological education wherever I observe. We are aware, again, that the principal purpose of our work is to save souls for Jesus Christ."

Another statement which Mr. McCreless received concerning the Chair of Evangelism came from Mr. Vernon D. Singleton, Vice President, United Fidelity Life Insurance Company, Dallas, Texas. Mr. Singleton wrote:

Wonderful Gift

"I hasten to congratulate you and express my personal appreciation for your wonderful gift. There are, of course, no limits to the good that will come from your gift and its influence will be felt around the world in the days to come."

In announcing Dr. Baker's new appointment, President Tate said that the position of chaplain would not be filled at once, but that several other members of the faculty and staff would temporarily carry on some of the organizational duties of the chaplain's office.

In this connection, Dr. Tate said that the University Council of Religious Activities will be requested to continue a study the chaplain has been making of the problems of religious life on the campus.

Dr. Baker holds B.Ph. and B.D. degrees from Emory University, D.D. and S.T.M. degrees from Union Theological Seminary in New York, the Ph.D. from Columbia University, and a D.D. from Southwestern University. He has been associate director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Texas and assistant minister at Travis Park Methodist Church in San Antonio. He has been minister at Asbury Community Methodist Church in Mount Vernon, New York; at Laurel Heights Methodist Church in San Antonio; and at churches in Laredo, Harlingen, and San Angelo.

Author of *Early New England Methodism, Bible Lectures* (three volumes), *A Biography of Boldness* (twelve radio sermons given on nationwide broadcasts), Dr. Baker has contributed articles to many magazines. He is married and has three sons and a daughter.

Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University

To win all persons for Christ
and
To help The Methodist Church
become an Evangelistic Movement

The Council of Evangelism

IS ORGANIZED

At the meeting of the Conference Secretaries of Evangelism held in Stillwater, Oklahoma, October 13 to 18, the Council of Evangelism of The Methodist Church was officially organized. Dr. George A. Fallon, pastor, Lakewood Methodist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, was elected President.

Sponsored by the General Board of Evangelism, the Council's primary purpose is to enlist the interest and support of both ministers and laymen in evangelism at the "grass roots" level.

Four Sectional Vice Presidents of the Council were elected. The Rev. Paul Grimes, Chicago, was elected Vice President by the Conference Secretaries; the Rev. A. J. Newton, Marshall, Texas, by the Board members; the Rev. Robert H. Bodine, Peoria, Illinois, by the District Secretaries, and the Rev. Kenneth J. Porray of Globe, Arizona, by the Pastors.

Two other officers are staff members of the General Board. They are the Rev. Gordon Pratt Baker, Secretary, and Mr. D. E. Jackson, a layman, Treasurer.

All across America persons recognize the need for a great evangelistic movement. Church membership is up; but, as adult delinquency increases, the crime rate rises more rapidly than church membership, the liquor interests are making widespread inroads upon the lives of our people, and, more and more, Sunday is being secularized.

> "Evangelism is aggressive and active obedience to Jesus Christ. It is the Christian witnessing to win assent. Without a clear conviction about Jesus Christ there can be no genuine evangelism."
>
> —E. Fay Campbell, "The Thrust of Evangelism," *The Student World*, Third Quarter, 1955.

The Council has been organized to help offset these trends. Through the Council, it is hoped that Methodists will take Christ into every avenue of experience and became an aggressive evangelistic movement.

Membership in the Council of Evangelism is open to persons from every sphere of the Church's life—from the Local Church, the District, the Conference, the Area, and the national levels.

To promote the work of the Council, to promote membership in it, to provide motivation for every Methodist to make increasing use of his evangelistic opportunities, to provide the members with the best evangelistic helps, to make available an attractive membership card, and to provide programs for the Annual Meetings (both national and regional) there are annual dues of $5.00 per person to all those who wish to join on a voluntary basis. Dues are payable with application for membership.

To apply for membership in the Council, or for additional information concerning it, write to Council of Evangelism, Gordon Pratt Baker, Secretary, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

Shown below are the newly-elected officers of the Council of Evangelism, sponsored by the General Board of Evangelism and officially organized at the meeting of the Conference Secretaries of Evangelism, Stillwater, Oklahoma, October 13-18.

Fallon | Grimes | Newton | Bodine | Porray | Baker | Jackson

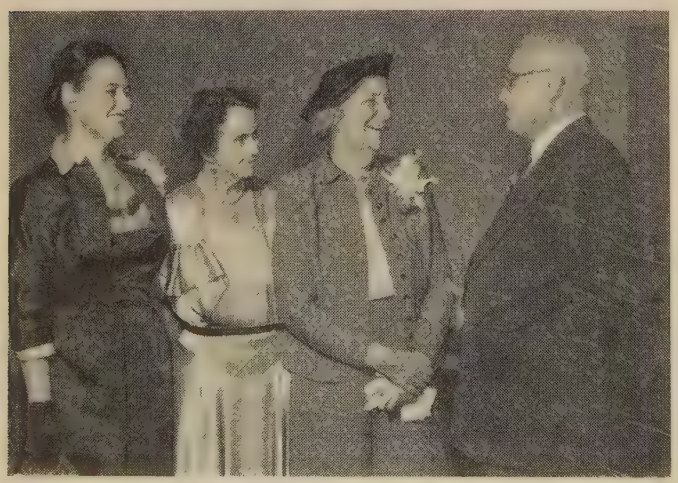
Margaret Applegarth Honored by The Upper Room

On September 30 Dr. Margaret T. Applegarth received The Upper Room citation, given annually to an American Christian who has given outstanding leadership in the field of world Christian fellowship. The United Church Women of Tennessee joined The Upper Room in honoring Miss Applegarth. Shown here, left to right, are: Mrs. A. B. Rodes, President of United Church Women of Nashville; Mrs. W. Maxey Jarman, Vice-President at Large, Y.W.C.A. of the U.S.A.; Miss Applegarth; Dr. J. Manning Potts, Editor of *The Upper Room;* Mrs. John T. McCall, President of United Church Women of Tennessee; Mrs. Charles S. Johnson, National Vice-President of United Church Women.

Miss Applegarth addresses the ministers. Shown here at the table with her are Dr. Hugh C. Stuntz, President, Scarritt College; Dr. John L. Hill, former Book Editor, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board; Dr. Frank F. Drowota, Minister, Woodmont Church.

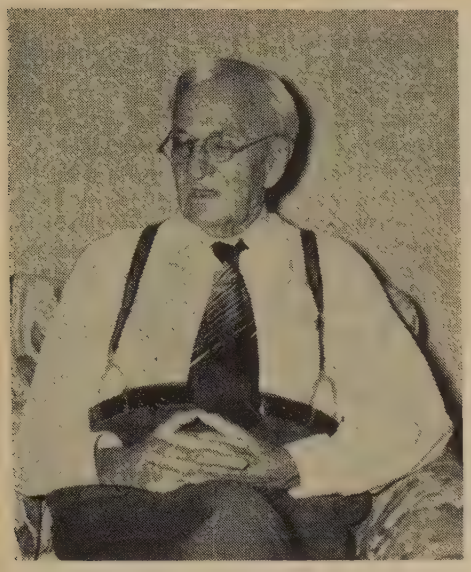
At noon Miss Applegarth addressed Nashville Ministers at a luncheon given in her honor. At the speakers' table were: Mr. O. B. Fanning, Director of Public Relations, The Methodist Church; Dr. Walter R. Courtenay, Minister, First Presbyterian Church; Dr. John W. Rustin, Minister, Belmont Methodist Church; Rev. Raymond T. Ferris, Rector, Christ Church Episcopal; Dr. Nels F. S. Ferre, Professor, School of Religion, Vanderbilt University; Dr. John O. Gross, Executive Secretary, the Department of Educational Institutions of the Board of Education of The Methodist Church; Dr. Harvie Branscomb, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University; Dr. Allen West, Minister, Woodmont Baptist Church; Dr. James W. Henley, Minister, West End Methodist Church; Dr. Thomas C. Barr, Minister, Trinity Presbyterian Church; Rev. James W. Carty, Religious Editor, The Nashville Tennessean.

Following The Citation Service tea was served in the Library of The Upper Room building, for which Mrs. Starkey Duncan, Tennessee Conference President of the Woman's Society of Christian Service served as chairman. The receiving line reading left to right: Mrs. McCall, Mrs. Potts, Miss Applegarth and Dr. Potts.



Left to right: Mrs. Nels F. S. Ferre, Miss Applegarth, Miss Sallie Lou MacKinnon, former executive secretary of Mission work in Africa and Europe under the Woman's Division, are served tea by Mrs. Hugh C. Stuntz, wife of the president of Scarritt College.

Every Upper Room Issue for 20 Years



Charley Yearwood

A continuous subscriber to THE UPPER ROOM for the 20 years of its publication is Charley Yearwood of East St. Louis, Illinois. He celebrated his 94th birthday on September 8 by preparing copies of THE UPPER ROOM and religious leaflets for mailing.

Mr. Yearwood did not become a Christian until the age of 28, but he has built a record of 66 years of activity in the Methodist Church. For 50 years he worked in the First Methodist Church of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, where he was converted shortly after the death of his five-year-old daughter. Here he was superintendent of the Sunday School and helped establish a mission chapel.

After serving three terms as alderman and city treasurer of Mt. Vernon, he moved to East St. Louis to live with his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Smith. Here, despite a serious automobile accident causing a leg amputation, this noble Christian has remained active at the First Methodist Church, and for the last year at Alta Sita Methodist Church.

At the top of the stationery used by Mr. Yearwood are these lines:

There is a destiny that makes us brothers
None goes his way alone;
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.

One does not wonder that such a man has a standing order for THE UPPER ROOM, which he mails to people for whom he prays. How rich his life must be!

MEN'S CLASS REACHES OUT

The class session of the Kay Bible Class of the First Methodist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, taught by Pat Morrison, is broadcast over radio station KTRN each Sunday. It is announced that those listeners who write in will be sent THE UPPER ROOM. Many who have received this gift, with a letter commending personal devotions and the establishing of a family altar, have expressed deep appreciation to the pastor, Rev. Alfred H. Freeman.

GRAND JURY FOREMAN DOES THE WITNESSING

A leading churchman was called for grand jury duty. He left home to report telling his wife he would get excused if possible. Upon return his wife said,

"Well, did you get free from serving on the jury?"

"Did I get free?" replied her husband. "I not only must serve, I was elected foreman! And I told those jurymen I would open each day with prayer. Whatever will I do? I've never led a prayer in public in my life."

"Why that's easy," said the wife. "You'll just read THE UPPER ROOM devotional every day just as we do at home."

This was not only the answer for the churchman, it also changed the whole spirit of the jury.

The Upper Room Fellowship

What is The Upper Room Fellowship?

Users of THE UPPER ROOM long to share this devotional guide. Many have joined The Fellowship, sending THE UPPER ROOM to those who were unacquainted; to those in other countries who, because of exchange controls, could not subscribe; Braille issues to individuals and to homes for the blind where no funds are available. It has been rewarding to the donors as well as to the recipients. The ministry of Fellowship includes Personal, Chaplains, Braille, Other Languages, and Specials. Anyone may join The Upper Room Fellowship, by writing to Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

Rosemary R. Singh
Trinidad, B.W.I.

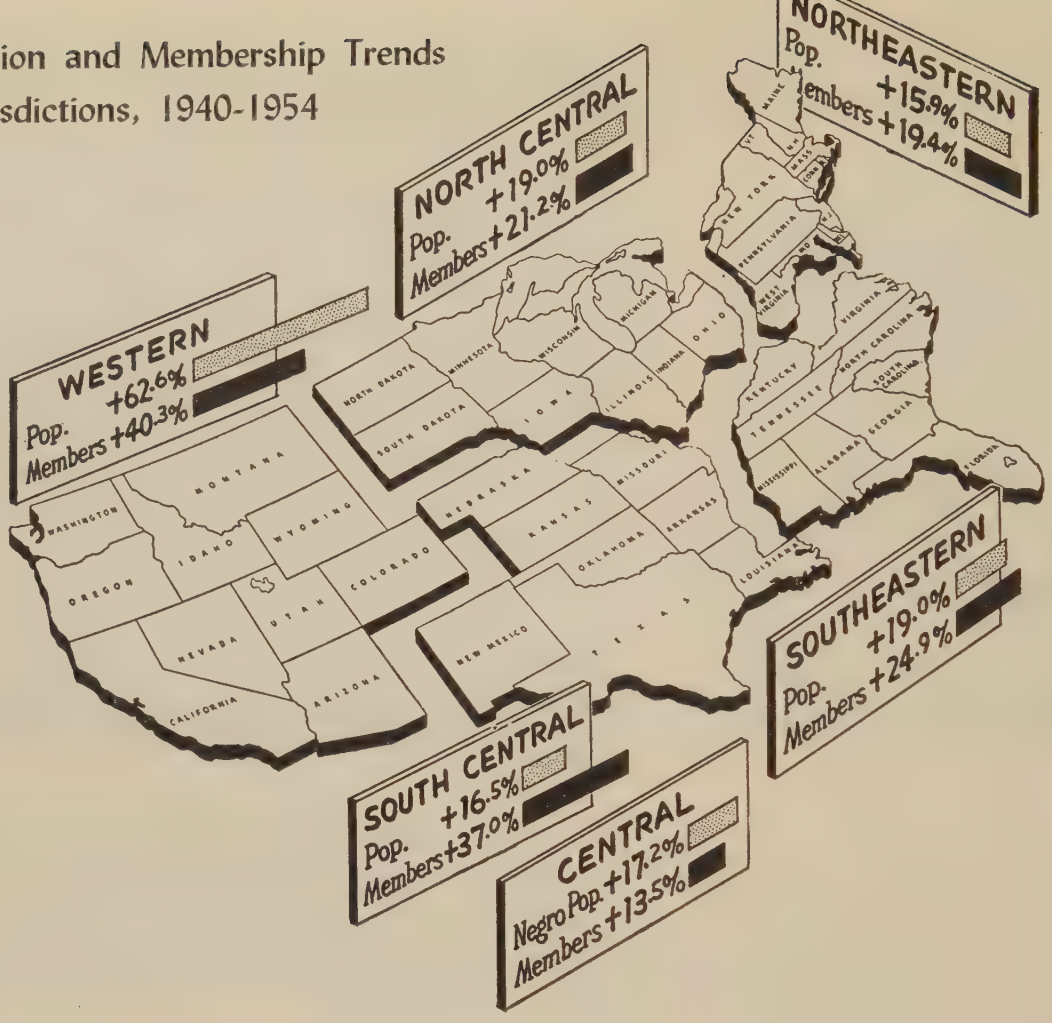
"At last the Control Department has granted my request and allows me to send to you $6.00. Now you can send 36 booklets (THE UPPER ROOM) to the list of friends I have been longing to have the joy which has been mine."

The above is from a letter written by Miss Rosemary R. Singh, an elementary school teacher in Trinidad, British West Indies. She has been a member of The Upper Room Fellowship for five years. At first Miss Singh received a gift subscription, sent by an unknown donor. After finding it so meaningful, in spite of the difficulty of controls in money exchange, she became a donor, rather than a recipient in this happy Fellowship. She has carefully distributed other devotional reading materials the Fellowship department has been able to send to her.

Miss Singh corresponds with Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director of The Upper Room Fellowship, almost as if she were a member of the family. She once sent a string of beads she had made with berries from one of their native trees—and the tree had been planted by her Grandfather. The anticipation of the queen's visit was related in one letter in a manner that made the excitement felt all the way to Tennessee. Indeed, this teacher has shared with Miss Chatham the desires of her heart, especially her longing for more and more education. Scarritt College has been contacted, and it is impossible to say where the Fellowship influence will end in the life of lovely Rosemary and with all those with whom she shares THE UPPER ROOM and the glory of such a Christian fellowship.

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP

Population and Membership Trends by Jurisdictions, 1940-1954



Population and Membership Trends by States

States Where State Lines and Conference Boundaries Agree

	Population			*Membership*		
State	*1950*	*July 1, 1954*	*% Change*	*1950*	*1954*	*% Change*
Montana	591,024	628,000	6.3	22,685	24,185	6.6
Wyoming	290,529	312,000	7.3	11,222	12,313	9.7
North Dakota	619,636	636,000	2.6	18,103	19,906	9.9
South Dakota	652,740	667,000	2.2	35,667	38,886	9.
Nebraska	1,325,510	1,366,000	3.0	115,860	121,575	4.9
Kansas	1,905,299	2,016,000	5.8	214,249	223,950	4.5
Oklahoma	2,233,351	2,268,000	1.6	192,033	212,031	10.4
Minnesota	2,982,483	3,103,000	4.0	105,192	110,721	5.2
Iowa	2,621,073	2,638,000	0.6	279,297	285,443	2.2
Missouri	3,954,653	4,154,000	5.0	260,220	252,399	—3.1
Indiana	3,934,224	4,209,000	7.0	354,235	346,422	—2.3
Wisconsin	3,434,575	3,578,000	4.2	109,266	110,976	1.5
Ohio	7,946,627	8,554,000	7.6	544,088	541,890	— .5
Michigan	6,371,766	7,024,000	10.2	229,056	238,930	4.3
Illinois	8,712,176	9,165,000	5.2	466,165	459,262	—1.5
Mississippi	2,178,914	2,204,000	1.2	185,582	183,751	—1.
Georgia	3,444,578	3,660,000	6.2	330,480	335,470	1.5
Louisiana	2,683,516	2,924,000	9.0	105,639	110,312	4.4
Arkansas	1,909,511	1,910,000	— .02	189,319	185,461	—2.1
Texas	7,711,194	8,468,000	9.8	619,563	662,406	6.9
Maine	913,774	930,000	1.8	30,281	31,284	3.3
Totals	58,705,959	61,946,000	5.5	4,418,202	4,507,573	2.0

—From *The Methodist Fact Book*, issued by the Council on World Service and Finance, available from The Methodist Publishing House at $1.00 per copy.

New Statistics on Church Membership

A Guide for the User of Church Statistics

One result of the current high interest in matters religious in the U.S.A. is that many people use church statistics who have no background of information concerning them. For example, many writers assume that the number of church members is also the number of "church-goers," or of persons attending. One frequently reads that church attendance has been rapidly increasing, whereas there are no systematic reports available of church attendance, even at the principal Sunday morning service. There have been a few sample studies of church attendance by polling agencies, but these are not reports of the churches.

The following statements have been prepared as an aid to those who use or wish to use church statistics:

1. There are no complete, annual compilations of church statistics, gathered by uniform methods. The annual compilations published in the *Yearbook of American Churches* simply present "the latest information" gathered by mailing blanks, on the same day, to the official statisticians of the religious bodies. *But not all of the reports are for 1954* in the latest compilation.

2. The compilations are made from figures supplied by the statisticians of religious bodies. Many of these reports come from annual figures furnished by the pastors and clerks of local congregations. Others are based on estimates, or on reports not made annually.

3. The definition of membership is always made by the religious bodies themselves. For example, Jewish congregations estimate the number of Jews in communities having congregations. The Eastern Orthodox churches include the persons in the cultural or nationality group served. Roman Catholics, and a few Protestant bodies, number all baptized persons, including children, in the membership. Most Protestant bodies include only so-called adults, or persons usually beyond 13 years of age, as members. Yet in the *Yearbook of American Churches, 1945*, it was estimated that about 5,000,000 members of Protestant churches were under 13 years of age.

4. Just as there are no national reports of church attendance, there are none on the proportion of members contributing money to local churches, or other data on the participation of persons included on the rolls of the religious bodies.

5. There has been no systematic inquiry concerning the "reasons" for the marked gains in church membership since 1940, in excess of the gains in population. Many persons state that the unusual gains may be attributed to certain or all of the following:

a. The "remarkable" birth rate since 1940.

b. The suburban movement, which has encouraged people to seek contacts through churches in new communities.

c. Systematic evangelistic programs in many denominations.

d. A change in the "climate of opinion" respecting organized religion in many communities, when the 1950s are compared with, say, the 1920s.

e. A return of young parents to church, at the time when their children start attending the church school.

f. The international crisis, which is believed to have made many persons more interested than previously in the resources of organized religion.

These are observations based, for the most part, on personal impressions. Some of the observers question the frequent use of membership statistics as an index of religious revival.

The Latest Information on Church Statistics

The latest information on church membership, religious education, number of clergymen, and gifts to certain religious bodies, compiled from reports made by the official statisticians of religious bodies of all faiths, again appears in the annual *Yearbook of American Churches,* published by the National Council of Churches.

The figures furnished are *mainly* for the calendar year 1954, or for a fiscal year ending in 1954, but a number of bodies had not yet reported for 1954 when the annual compilation was made.

The reports on church membership received from official statisticians of religious bodies reveal a total membership of 97,482,611 persons in 254 bodies, compared with a total of 94,842,845 persons, the figure published in the previous *Yearbook*. These figures are for Continental United States, i.e., the 48 states and the District of Columbia.

The total number of church members is equal to 60.3 per cent of the population in Continental United States. This is the highest proportion of the population ever reported to be on the church rolls.

The gain of 2,639,766 persons is equal to 2.8 per cent for the year. The number of Protestants reported increased 2.3 per cent over the previous annual total. The number of Roman Catholics increased 2.9 per cent.

Between 1953 and 1954 the estimated population of Continental United States increased 1.7 per cent.

There were 300,056 local churches reported, compared with 294,359 a year earlier. The gain is equal to 1.9 per cent.

Of 268 religious bodies listed, there are 254 reporting church membership.

An analysis of the latest information in six major groups reveals the following:

Membership, by Religious Groups

Buddhist	63,000
Old Catholic and Polish National Catholic	367,918
Eastern Orthodox	2,024,219
Jewish	5,500,000
Roman Catholic	32,403,332
Protestant	57,124,142
Total	97,482,611

There are 81 religious bodies having 50,000, or more, members, and these reported over 98 per cent of all members. Thus about 170 bodies reporting had less than two per cent of the total membership.

There are also Muslims in the United States, but no statistical reports are available. Informal estimates are cited in the directory of religious bodies in the *Yearbook*.

The Protestant church membership was equal to 58.6 per cent of all church membership in 1954—about the same as a year earlier. It seems that the major religious groups have developed in about the same relation to each other during the last 50 years.

A recital of these trends and data gives rise to the usual questions about definitions of membership. The Roman Catholics count all baptized persons, including infants. The Jews regard as members all Jews in communities having congregations. The Eastern Orthodox churches include all persons in their nationality or cultural groups. Most Protestant bodies count only the persons who have attained full membership, and previous estimates have indicated that all but a small minority of these are over 13 years of age. However, many Lutheran bodies and the Protestant Episcopal Church now report all baptized persons, and not only those confirmed.

The Church of Christ, Scientist, did not furnish membership figures because of a regulation of that body that forbids "the numbering of people and the reporting of such statistics for publication." In the *Census of Religious Bodies, 1936,* published by the U. S. Bureau of the Census, there were reported 268,915 members of the Church of Christ, Scientist.

Figures from Larger Bodies

The table on membership in the 81 religious bodies reporting 50,000, or more, members each, and having 98.4 per cent of all members, follows:

MEMBERSHIP OF 81 RELIGIOUS BODIES WITH 50,000 OR MORE MEMBERS

Name of Religious Body	*Year*	*Number of Churches*	*Inclusive Membership*
Seventh-day Adventist	1954	2,845	270,079
Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God	1951	300	75,000
Assemblies of God	1954	7,170	400,000
Baptist Bodies:			
American Baptist Convention	1953	6,495	1,505,871
Southern Baptist Convention	1954	29,863	8,163,562
National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	1954	25,603	4,557,416
National Baptist Convention of America	1954	11,136	2,608,974
American Baptist Association	1951	2,105	286,691
Baptist General Conference of America	1954	406	52,485
Free Will Baptists	1954	4,023	405,000
General Association of Regular Baptist Churches	1953	690	113,878
General Baptists	1954	700	51,368
National Baptist Evangelical Life and Soul Saving Assembly of U.S.A.	1951	264	57,674
National Primitive Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.	1952	1,019	80,000
North American Baptist Association	1954	1,625	243,750
Primitive Baptists	1950	1,000	72,000
United Baptists	1954	564	60,525
United Free Will Baptist Church	1952	836	100,000
Brethren (German Baptists):			
Church of the Brethren	1954	1,035	193,547
Buddhist Churches of America	1954	49	63,000
Christ Unity Science Church	1953	4,481	1,581,286
Christian and Missionary Alliance	1953	931	61,483
Churches of God:			
Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.)	1954	2,750	138,349
Church of God (Anderson, Ind.)	1954	2,089	118,696
The Church of God	1954	1,803	68,773
Church of God in Christ	1954	3,240	328,304
Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.	1952	175	50,000
Church of the Nazarene	1954	3,970	260,551
Churches of Christ	1954	16,500	1,600,000
Congregational Christian Churches	1954	5,425	1,298,205
Disciples of Christ, International Convention	1954	7,925	1,881,911
Eastern Churches:			
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church	1954	60	75,100
Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church of America	1954	49	80,000
Greek Archdiocese of North and South America	1954	347	1,000,000
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America	1954	55	50,000
The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia	1951	91	55,000
The Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America	1953	326	440,000
Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church	1953	53	100,000
Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church	1954	78	75,000
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of U.S.A.	1954	92	71,248
Evangelical and Reformed Church	1954	2,735	761,842
Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America	1954	488	53,388
Evangelical United Brethren Church	1954	4,498	746,206
Federated Churches	1936	508	88,411
Friends:			
Five Years Meeting of Friends	1954	499	69,560
Independent Fundamental Churches of America	1946	650	65,000
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel	1954	604	87,206
Jewish Congregations	1954	4,079	5,500,000
Latter-Day Saints:			
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	1954	2,619	1,179,887
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	1954	764	134,705
Lutheran:			
Lutheran Synodical Conf. of N. A.—Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod	1954	4,701	1,932,000
Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States	1953	886	322,947
American Lutheran Church	1953	1,896	799,790
Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church	1954	1,158	510,116
Evangelical Lutheran Church	1953	2,460	900,536
Lutheran Free Church	1954	342	68,773
United Evangelical Lutheran Church	1953	167	52,236
United Lutheran Church in America	1954	4,015	2,113,779
The Mennonite Church	1954	508	63,998
Methodist Bodies:			
African Methodist Episcopal Church	1951	5,878	1,166,301
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	1952	3,160	760,158
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church	1951	2,469	392,167
Free Methodist Church of N. A.	1954	1,211	50,660
The Methodist Church	1954	39,801	9,202,728
Moravian Church in America (Unitas Fratrum)	1954	145	52,735
Old Catholic Churches:			
North American Old Roman Catholic Church	1954	64	85,225
Pentecostal Assemblies:			
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.	1954	395	60,000
United Pentecostal Church	1954	1,200	125,000
Polish National Catholic Church of America	1951	156	265,879
Presbyterian Bodies:			
Cumberland Presbyterian Church	1954	1,008	84,776
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.	1954	3,806	780,837
Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.	1954	8,282	2,526,129
United Presbyterian Church of N. A.	1954	827	237,233
Protestant Episcopal Church	1953	7,170	2,660,699
Reformed Bodies:			
Christian Reformed Church	1954	466	196,822
Reformed Church in America	1954	796	203,230
Roman Catholic Church	1954	20,794	32,403,332
Salvation Army	1954	1,327	240,130
Spiritualists:			
International General Assembly of Spiritualists	1952	182	157,000
Unitarian Churches	1954	366	90,398
Universalist Church of America	1954	401	71,020
Total: 81 Bodies only		281,649	95,957,565

There Are Few . . .

Earthly Things . . .

More Beautiful . . .

Than a Family Going to Worship

Churches Participating in

THE CHAIN OF PRAYER

During December

December 1, 1955

Community Methodist Church	Shellbeach, California
First Methodist Church	Normangee, Texas

December 2, 1955

Trinity Methodist Church	San Diego, California
Carens Methodist Church	Carens, Texas

December 3, 1955

Biggs Methodist Church	Biggs, California
Southland Methodist Church	Southland, Texas

December 4, 1955

St. Paul's Methodist Church	Abilene, Texas
The Methodist Church	Versailles, Missouri

December 5, 1955

San Gabriel Methodist Church	San Gabriel, California
First Methodist Church	Victoria, Texas

December 6, 1955

Prunedale Community Methodist Church	Salinas, California
St. Paul's Methodist Church	Palestine, Texas

December 7, 1955

First Methodist Church	Huntington Park, California
Denton Valley Methodist Circuit	Abilene, Texas
First Methodist Church	Hobbs, New Mexico

December 8, 1955

First Methodist Church	LaVerne, California
Capps Methodist Church	Abilene, Texas

December 9, 1955

Hamilton Methodist Church	Los Angeles, California
Mulberry Street Methodist Church	Mt. Vernon, Ohio

December 10, 1955

Susana Knolls	Simi, California
Trinity Methodist Church	Amarillo, Texas

December 11, 1955

First Methodist Church	Opelika, Alabama
North End Methodist Church	Beaumont, Texas

December 12, 1955

Filipino Methodist Church	Stockton, California
Pleasant Valley Methodist Church	Amarillo, Texas

December 13, 1955

First Methodist Church	Woodland, California
First Methodist Church	Amarillo, Texas

December 14, 1955

First Methodist Church	Torrance, California
Art Methodist Church	Art, Texas

December 15, 1955

Tuolumne Community Methodist Church	Tuolumne, California
Hayne Methodist Chapel	Austin, Texas

December 16, 1955

The Methodist Church	Sonoma, California
Faith Methodist Church	Austin, Texas

December 17, 1955

Rosemead Methodist Church	Rosemead, California
First Methodist Church	Palo Alto, California

December 18, 1955

First Methodist Church	Fulton, Kentucky
Buda Methodist Church	Buda, Texas

December 19, 1955

Montclair Methodist Church	Oakland, California
First Methodist Church	Bay City, Texas

December 20, 1955

First Methodist Church	Calexico, California
First Methodist Church	Beeville, Texas

December 21, 1955

Canoga Park Community Methodist Church	Canoga Park, California
Trinity Methodist Church	Brady, Texas

December 22, 1955

Community Methodist Church	Colfax, California
First Methodist Church	Brazoria, Texas

December 23, 1955

First Methodist Church	Escondido, California
Methodist Church	Burleson, Texas

December 24, 1955

Aldersgate Methodist Church	Del Paso Heights, California
Salem Methodist Church	Bryan, Texas

December 25, 1955

Spurgeon Memorial Methodist Church	Santa Ana, California
Wesley Methodist Church	Cisco, Texas

December 26, 1955

Lakeport Methodist Church	Lakeport, California
Carbon Methodist Church	Carbon, Texas

December 27, 1955

Toluca Lake Methodist Church	North Hollywood, California
Cedar Bayou	Cedar Bayou, Texas

December 28, 1955

North Hollywood Village	North Hollywood, California
Channing Church	Channing, Texas

December 29, 1955

St. Paul's Methodist Church	Oxnard, California
First Methodist Church	Chillicothe, Texas

December 30, 1955

Grace United Methodist Church	San Francisco, California
Chireno Circuit	Chireno, Texas

December 31, 1955

Hamilton Methodist Church	San Francisco, California
Colleyville Methodist Church	Colleyville, Texas

December 31, 1955 to January 1, 1956

First Methodist Church	Ogden, Utah
Allston Methodist Church	Allston, Massachusetts

An actor dramatizes scriptural prophecies of the Christ.

OUTDOOR

by Clifford Ingram
Ruth Ensor Methodist Church
Old Hickory, Tennessee

"PREACHER, I have three donkeys. Just arrived from Texas today. You can use all three of them," offered a stranger when asked if he would furnish a donkey for the outdoor Christmas pageant.

Three small boys led, pushed, and pulled the reluctant animals one-half mile each day for six days so that they could be used in the manger scene.

Ninety out of a membership of 150 had an acting part in the pageant. Each evening 15 different actors were used. Many others had responsibilities; and the community responded with free lumber, slabs, and willing hands.

Stage Built

A stage 70 feet long was built along the north side of the church by the men. On this side there was a vacant lot which provided standing and parking room for the audience. This stage was then divided up into sections, and each section was prepared for a tableau.

Old sheets were dyed, sewed together, and tacked to the wall of the church to provide a background. Rocks and mountains were painted on cardboard and set up to add to the background. Rich-col-

Herod inquires concerning the whereabouts of the Christ Child.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

ored costumes, designed from the paintings of Giotto, were fashioned by the able hands of the women.

The first night, December 19, was crammed with suspense. The pageant was most successful, however, despite the fact that only two rehearsals had been held—and they were not perfect. To make this night possible, committees had planned and thought for two months. Each night was a success, and there was a freshness even in the last performance on December 24.

Scenes Portrayed

"The Prophecy," "The Annunciation," "The Birth," "The Shepherds," "The Wise Men Before King Herod," and "The Manger" were among the scenes portrayed. Christmas carols, narration, and flood lights were used with each scene. All this was operated by one man in a control room in the church. It took him one entire day to work out the sequence and synchronization. A tape recorder, a phonograph with loud speakers, and separate flood lights were used for each scene.

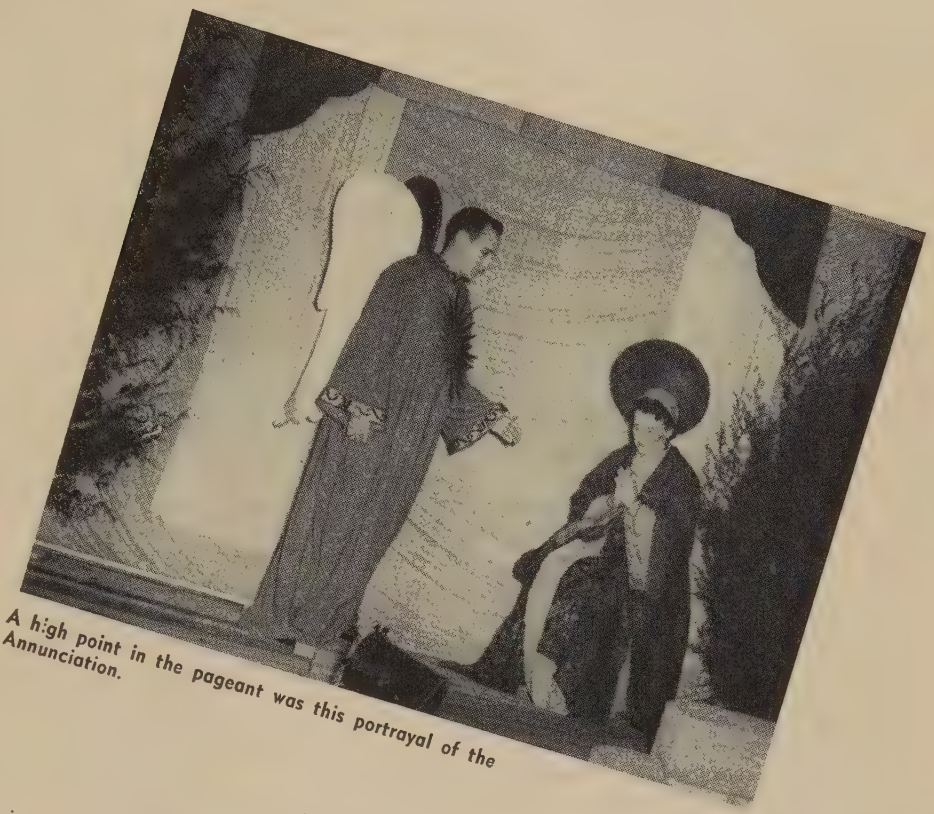
"We can do it for $50," said the pastor. But he was wrong. It cost $55. This does not include the cost of the costumes, which were paid for by the families making them. The costumes cost from $1.00 to $3.00.

"I have never seen anything like this," said a Presbyterian friend who came to watch.

"This is important. I'm going to be here each night and bring my entire family so that we can help if someone fails to show up," volunteered a member who works 12 hours each day in a filling station.

Divine Moment

The faces of those who participated made it evident that this was not a comedy. Nor was it an ordinary play. Rather, it was a divine moment filled with the presence of the living Christ. Christmas was a real experience of worship for all who shared the outdoor Christmas pageant.



A high point in the pageant was this portrayal of the Annunciation.

Shepherds and wise men meet at the manger.

Christmas for Christ

IN THE HOME

by

Gordon Pratt Baker

WHEN God saw fit to send His Christ to earth, He did not choose the palace of a king. Nor did He select the grand estate of a Roman patriarch. Not even the shining halls of the Temple fell within His choice. Instead, He made the simple home of a Palestinian carpenter the center of eternal hope.

The child Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man amidst the shavings of a workshop where He shared Joseph's honest toil. He learned to pray at Mary's knee. He dedicated Himself to the divine cause in the sanctuary of His home.

Advent made the home forever focal to salvation. There is little hope of redemption apart from the home. What the home is the world will be. Here men must learn and practice the transforming truths by which to change the pattern of the years. Here they must attain ideals by which to shape the design of their souls.

A Family Experience

The first Christmas was a family experience, and Christianity has always been a family faith. It has always flourished in the homes of the faithful. In a time of tyranny, it became strong because stalwart souls like Philemon established churches in their homes. Christmas proclaims the inescapable fact that central to the home is Christ.

What kind of home do *we* have this Christmas? Is it a home where Christ stands supreme? Is it marked by the inspiration of dedicated labor? Does it know the countless miracles that love alone can work? Is it alive to the spiritual power that comes from personal experiences with Christ? Does it witness to a deepening faith developed through the shared purposes of God?

How far so many of us have strayed from the experience of the first Christmas! Then a humble family quietly accepted the glory of God into its life, and just as quietly let that glory loose in all the world. Unless our Christmases do the same for us, we are missing the greatest gift God has to offer.

Christmas is more than a time for remembering. It is a time for revealing. It is more than a time for receiving. It is a time for giving. But we have not truly given if our gifts are only material things. The real gifts at Christmas are love and faith and hope and example. The greatest gift is to offer men Christ.

A Simple Fact

How simply we can do that! We can do it, for example, in the way we observe Christmas in our own home!

Instead of noisy parties (which so often have their nagging aftermath), we can have a family gathering to read again from the Gospels the great story of Christmas, to sing the old, familiar carols with their triumphant affirmations of faith in a God who cares, and to pray as a family group to the Father whose Son redemptively relates us to the whole Family of God. Many homes have *The Upper Room* and use it, day by day, as a regular devotional aid. The November-December issue carries a special Home Worship Service for Christmas in addition to the regular meditation. To observe Christmas Eve or to begin Christmas Day with the use of such a service will make this holy occasion a truly inspiring experience.

We can make a spiritually festival occasion of Christmas by having the entire family share in the various preparations for the Holy Season. The children can be encouraged to help with—and even to help plan—the decorations for the home. As the tree is trimmed and the mantel draped with holly, as a star is hung in the window or a manger scene constructed on the lawn or by the fireplace, each enticing symbol should be explained in terms of its religious significance.

Older children can be asked to bake cookies and make candy for family and friends to share. They can be especially urged to prepare such "goodies" for shut-ins. Younger children can be made "helpers" in this project by going along to deliver them.

The family can select together Christmas cards with religious pictures and messages and then appoint an evening when all the members join in the task of preparing them for the mails. Smaller children will be happy to seal envelopes and attach stamps. And all the while, the conversation should center upon the Christ and what His birthday means in the lives of men.

To share the spirit of Christ more fully, the family might visit the aged on Christmas Eve or during the afternoon of Christmas Day and leave small mementoes of the call. To have the children come would bring real joy to many old folks who are facing the sunset alone.

Likewise, a child from an orphanage or an underprivileged home might be invited to share the Christmas holidays with the family. A little gift for him or her, and a place before the family Christmas tree, would translate the compassion of Jesus in such a graphic manner that all concerned would *know* that "Love came down at Christmas."

—*This article is available from* TIDINGS *in leaflet form at $1.50 per 100.*

The Upper Room

Christmas Carols

Radio-TV Parish

A series of musical programs for radio emphasizing the spiritual side of Christmas traditions are again being offered for the 1955 Christmas season. You will want these programs on the air in your community. Our traditional Christmas customs are given a genuine spiritual content. Write to The Upper Room Radio-TV Parish, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, for more information. For days and hour of broadcast in your community consult your local station.

By October 18, the following stations had already arranged to broadcast The Upper Room Christmas Carol programs:

ALABAMA
Anniston, WHMA
Atmore, WATM
Auburn, WAUD
Birmingham, WBRC
Birmingham, WLBS
Cullman, WFMH
Decatur, WHOS
Dothan, WAGF
Dothan, WOOF
Eufaula, WULA
Fayette, WWWF
Fort Payne, WFPA
Geneva, WGEA
Greenville, WGYV
Guntersville, WGSV
Marion, WJAM
Montgomery, WBAM
Oneonta, WCRL
Scottsboro, WCRI
Tuscaloosa, WMPT
University, WUOA-FM

ARIZONA
Douglas, KAWT
Flagstaff, KGPH
Globe, KWJB
Tucson, KOPO
Winslow, KVNC

ARKANSAS
Camden, KAMD
Crossett, KAGH
El Dorado, KDMS
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Harrison, KHOZ
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A Strange Necessary Appeal

by

Bishop Roy H. Short

THE church press during December will be filled with articles and editorials and advertising, urging all of us to make Christmas Christian. Almost all the boards and agencies of our Church are joining wholeheartedly in this effort. Thousands of our churches, it is to be hoped all of them, will take up this appeal and seek to lay it upon the hearts of their people.

It is passing strange that such an appeal should be necessary. And yet the startling fact is that it is. The business world has discovered the large possible profits which may be associated with Christmas, and in late years we have witnessed a greatly increased commercialism of the birthday of the lowly carpenter who had not where to lay his head. The tragic feature of this is that multitudes, particularly children, are led to think of Christmas in terms of receiving, whereas actually it springs out of the most lavish giving in all history, God's unsparing gift of His Son.

Increasingly Secular

Likewise, Christmas has increasingly become secularized as there has come a seemingly larger emphasis upon those Christmas traditions associated with Santa Claus, rather than those connected with the Manger, and the Star, and the Choiring Angels, and the Holy Child.

Saddest of all, Christmas has in many quarters become paganized as so many people turn it into an occasion of drinking, unrestrained hilarity, and sometimes even debauchery.

No wonder the church seeks to call its people afresh to making Christmas Christian.

But what, it may be asked, is involved in making Christmas Christian beyond the avoidance of its commercialism, its secularism, and unseeming Christian behavior? The obvious reply is simple.

Keeping Christmas Christian, for the individual Christian and the Christian home, must include worship. He does not truly keep Christmas who, in the church and in the home, does not join with shepherds, wise men, the heavenly hosts, and the vast company of believing Christians of all ages in holy adoration beside the cradle of the new born King.

For the Family

Keeping Christmas Christian for the individual Christian and the Christian home must involve a rekindling of the sense of family fellowship and loyalty and love. It must mean a re-enactment within each of our own homes of something of the warmth and mellowness and tenderness of the family scene at Bethlehem. Christmas is for the family and should inevitably mean a fresh drawing of the family together. Happily it can do this, even though intervening and, for the time being, unbridgeable miles make an actual coming together impossible, or even though part of the family has gone on to the Father's House, while for the others the earthly journey is at yet unfinished.

Finally, keeping Christmas Christian must mean doing something for others. He who does not do something for others does not truly keep Christmas. In forgetting them, he forgets Him whose birthday Christmas is, and who, long ago, said in such unforgettable words, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these. . . ."

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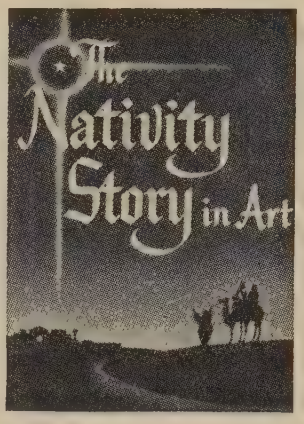

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TIDINGS

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Nashville 5, Tenn.

A Watch Night at Home

by
John C. Irwin
Professor of Preaching
Garrett Biblical Institute

WE are told that Mr. Wesley's innovation of "watch night" was an effort to redeem an existing custom. The rough coal miners of Kingswood formerly spent the last night of the year in drunken revelry. Some urged that the custom be forbidden, but Mr. Wesley thought it better to turn it to Christian uses. Accordingly, he announced a meeting for the night which proved such a blessed occasion that in early Methodism watch night was for a time observed monthly "on the Friday nearest the new moon, so that we might have light thither and back again."

The religious observances at watch night meetings are described as "one or more sermons, with hymns and prayers . . . till a few minutes before midnight; the assemblies then bow in silent prayer till the clock strikes the end of the old year and the advent of the new; when, rising with a song of praise or a covenant hymn, they disperse quietly to their homes." (Stevens, *History of Methodism,* Vol. II, p. 457.)

Time to Redeem

Perhaps it is again time to redeem accustomed observances and turn them to Christian use. The year end in many communities is a time of hilarity and even of revelry. Many families scatter for the evening—parents, older and younger children, each going separate ways with their separate friends. What might be a time of solemnity and of family unity becomes merely another secular evening with no overtones of heightened awareness of living.

To be sure, many Methodist churches have never given up the old watch night and many Methodist families blend themselves with the larger family of God in the solemn watching for the new year in the church. But in many other places, where no church observance is planned, it would be richly rewarding to have a watch night at home.

In some homes where children are small, this home service might be held early in the evening, or as a special family devotion about the supper table. In other homes members of the family might promise to one another the last hour of the year. Particularly in these times, when so many families have absent members, there would be a deepening of family ties by such a year end family fellowship.

Worship Center

Mother might make her contribution by arranging a worship center for the occasion. A well-chosen religious picture on table or fireplace, some Christmas greens, and a candle would provide an atmosphere of worship. Father might select some favorite hymns. If there is a fireplace, the boys might be responsible for the fire. Other children could be asked to be ready with poetry and Scripture for the new year. Place chairs for the family group in a semicircle about the worship center or fireplace with an empty chair for each absent member.

A Bible and a Methodist Hymnal will furnish all the worship materials needed. (We believe there should be a Methodist Hymnal in every Methodist home!) Begin with a singing of favorite hymns. On this night you will want to include "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Lead, Kindly Light," and "Rock of Ages."

Read the first fourteen verses of Psalm 139 or some other favorite Scripture. Let each member of the family give the Bible verse he would like to take into the new year as a motto. If any members have brought New Year poems, have them read. Someone should read Tennyson's "Ring Out, Wild Bells" (Hymnal No. 537).

Let there be a period of prayer—of thanksgiving for God's mercies during the old year and for His guidance in the new. Let the absent members of the family circle be remembered in prayer. To close the prayer period, someone might read Frances Havergal's "Another Year Is Dawning" (Hymnal No. 534).

Just before midnight follow the old Methodist custom of joining in silent prayer as the year ends. Then, as the New Year is born, let the family stand and join hands in circle of fellowship as they sing a dedication for the days ahead, "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee."

This year Watch Night comes on Saturday. Consequently, SHEPHERDS is recommending that families observe the occasion with devotions in the home as a means of preparing spiritually for a great church worship on the first day of the year 1956, when the World Wide Church Attendance Movement will be launched with one of its major themes being "Worship God Every Day in Your Home." These family devotions should be conducted early in the evening so the family will be fresh for the Sunday morning worship experience.

Where churches are planning the traditional Watch Night Service, TIDINGS recommends the use of either of two orders of worship. One is the popular *John Wesley Covenant Service,* adapted for contemporary use. The other is the *Service of Worship for Covenant Sunday and Watch Night,* by George H. Jones, editor of TIDINGS.

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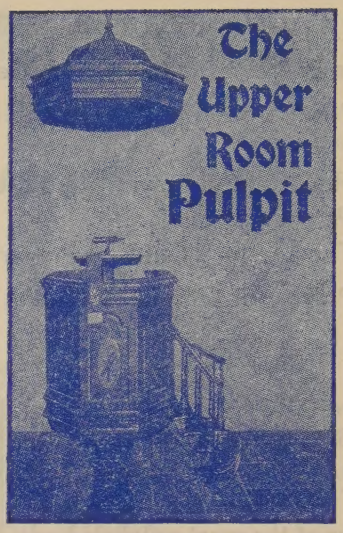

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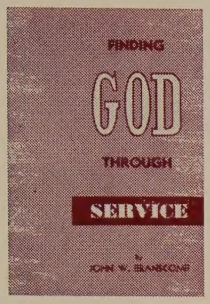

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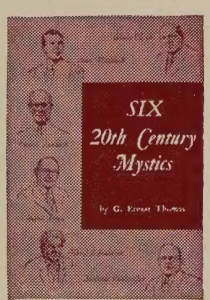

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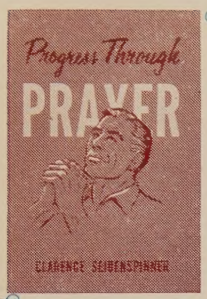

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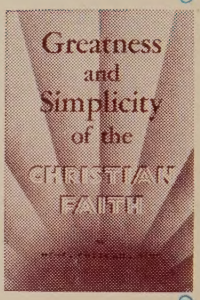

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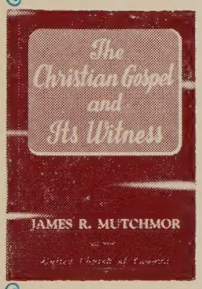

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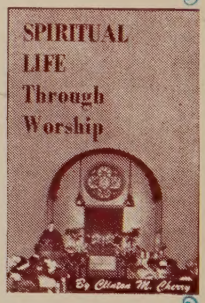

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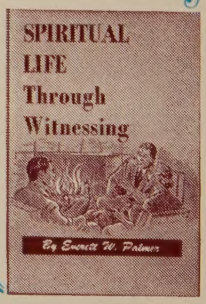

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